From Scraps to Soil

Find details that explain a main idea.

3.LF.19.a "Explain how supporting details contribute to the main idea, using textual evidence."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the sentence that tells what the worm bin helps the class do. Circle two details that explain how the bin does it.

Our Classroom Worm Bin

1. Our class keeps a worm bin near the school garden. It helps turn some food scraps into useful compost for plants. At lunch, we save apple cores and carrot peels instead of throwing them away. We do not add meat or cheese because these foods can smell bad and attract pests. Each Friday, two students place the saved scraps under the bin's damp paper bedding.

2. The bin has small air holes, so the worms can breathe. We keep shredded paper damp, but not soaking wet. The worms need a moist home to stay alive. As the scraps soften and break down, worms feed on the rotting bits. The worms leave behind tiny piles called castings. Mixed with the broken-down scraps, the castings become compost that helps the soil hold water.

3. When the compost is ready, we mix it into the garden soil. The soil holds water better, which helps our bean plants grow. We still need to water the plants and give them sunlight. The bin also means fewer food scraps go into the trash can. What once seemed like lunch waste now helps make a healthy place for plants to grow.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What is the passage's main idea? Use a detail from the first paragraph to explain how it supports that idea.

2. How does the detail about air holes help explain how the worm bin works? Use evidence from the passage.

3. How does the detail about castings support the passage's main idea?

4. How does mixing the finished compost into garden soil support the main idea? Use a detail from the last paragraph.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a three-sentence note to next year's class. Tell the passage's main idea, then use one rule for feeding the bin and one way the bin helps the school to explain that idea.

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PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the sentence that tells what the worm bin helps the class do. Circle two details that explain how the bin does it. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What is the passage's main idea? Use a detail from the first paragraph to explain how it supports that idea.	**The worm bin turns food scraps into useful compost. The class saves apple cores and carrot peels to put in the bin, giving the worms scraps that can break down.**
2	How does the detail about air holes help explain how the worm bin works? Use evidence from the passage.	**The air holes let the worms breathe. Living worms can help turn the scraps into compost.**
3	How does the detail about castings support the passage's main idea?	**The worms leave castings that mix with the broken-down scraps to become compost. This shows how the bin makes something useful.**
4	How does mixing the finished compost into garden soil support the main idea? Use a detail from the last paragraph.	**It shows that the compost is useful for plants. The passage says the soil holds water better, which helps the bean plants grow.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Our worm bin turns lunch scraps into useful compost instead of letting them go to waste. We leave out meat and cheese because they can smell bad and attract pests, so the bin stays a good place to make compost. The bin also keeps some food scraps out of the trash, so it helps our school waste less.

Accept other accurate details when students explain how each one supports the main idea. For the note, look for three sentences, a feeding rule from the passage, and a way the bin helps the school.