Hyphens at Work

A model text on compound terms and modifiers.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.11-12.2a "Observe hyphenation conventions."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Number the 19 hyphenated expressions in the passage. Then circle the unhyphenated phrase long term in the final sentence of paragraph 2 to compare its use with long-term.

Designing Shade

1 At a public library in Phoenix, a student design team proposed a shade-centered courtyard for people waiting outside. Their plan used wide-canopied desert trees, light-colored paving, and refill stations to lower heat exposure. A well-designed courtyard can make a bus stop safer during extreme heat, the team explained. The group also wanted drought-tolerant plants, which need less water than a lawn. Before presenting, members gathered temperature readings at several sun-exposed locations. They compared those readings with data from a covered walkway and made a simple, evidence-based map of the hottest areas.

2 The team's proposal included a low-cost test before any construction began. Volunteers placed thermometers at knee-high, waist-high, and eye-level positions, because pavement can radiate heat differently near the ground. They recorded conditions at fifteen-minute intervals from noon to sunset. This careful data-collection method gave the team more than one temperature for each site. In their report, they described the result as a long-term concern for neighborhoods with few shaded routes. After the study, however, the concern remained long term: summer heat would continue to affect daily travel.

3 To test the proposal, the library built a small-scale mock-up beside its entrance. The temporary structure held fabric panels at different angles, allowing observers to see where shade fell at 3:00 p.m. Staff members invited local residents to complete a one-page survey about comfort and access. The survey asked whether the layout was user-friendly for parents with strollers, older adults, and wheelchair users. A state-of-the-art cooling system was not part of the modest project. Instead, the team focused on practical changes that could be installed quickly and maintained by the community.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. List the seven hyphenated modifiers in paragraph 1.

2. Why is long-term hyphenated in “a long-term concern” but written without a hyphen in “the concern remained long term”?

3. What three hyphenated terms describe the thermometer positions in paragraph 2? What do the hyphens show?

4. Paragraph 3 uses mock-up but writes wheelchair users without a hyphen. Explain the difference.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write two connected sentences about a practical improvement at your school. In the first sentence, use a hyphenated two-word compound before a noun. In the second sentence, use the same words after a linking verb without a hyphen.

ANSWER KEY

Hyphens at Work

HIGH SCHOOL · L.11-12.2a

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Number the 19 hyphenated expressions in the passage. Then circle the unhyphenated phrase long term in the final sentence of paragraph 2 to compare its use with long-term. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	List the seven hyphenated modifiers in paragraph 1.	**shade-centered; wide-canopied; light-colored; well-designed; drought-tolerant; sun-exposed; evidence-based**
2	Why is long-term hyphenated in "a long-term concern" but written without a hyphen in "the concern remained long term"?	**Long-term comes before and modifies the noun concern. Long term follows the linking verb remained, so it is not hyphenated.**
3	What three hyphenated terms describe the thermometer positions in paragraph 2? What do the hyphens show?	**knee-high, waist-high, and eye-level. The hyphens show that the words work together as compound modifiers before positions.**
4	Paragraph 3 uses mock-up but writes wheelchair users without a hyphen. Explain the difference.	**Mock-up is a conventionally hyphenated compound noun. Wheelchair is a closed compound word that modifies users, so no hyphen is needed.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The student council proposed a low-cost rain garden beside the parking lot. The design would be low cost because students could use donated native plants.

Accept other original responses that correctly hyphenate a compound modifier before a noun and remove the hyphen when the same words follow a linking verb.