

Waterway That Changed Trade

Read how relevant information develops an explanation of a historic project.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.2b "Develop the topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the definition of a key word, circle four facts or concrete details, and put a star beside two details that show the canal's effects. These kinds of information develop an explanatory topic.

The Erie Canal

- ① The Erie Canal was a 363-mile waterway built across New York State in the early 1800s. A canal is a human-made channel that carries boats. Before the canal opened, moving goods from Buffalo to New York City meant traveling over rough roads or taking a longer route through Canada. Workers began digging in 1817. They connected the Hudson River near Albany to Lake Erie at Buffalo, creating a route between the Great Lakes and the Atlantic Ocean. This route reshaped trade.
- ② Building the canal required engineers to solve the problem of changing elevation. The land rises about 571 feet from the Hudson River to Lake Erie. To move boats uphill or downhill, builders made 83 locks, chambers with gates at each end. A lock filled with water to raise a boat, then emptied to lower it. Workers used shovels, picks, horses, and wheelbarrows. Many were Irish immigrants, while others came from local farms. Their labor turned a difficult landscape into a working water route.
- ③ When the canal opened in 1825, it lowered the cost of shipping goods between the Midwest and the East Coast. Farmers could send wheat and other products east more cheaply. In return, stores in western towns received tools, cloth, and household goods. Towns such as Rochester and Buffalo grew beside the canal. The waterway also helped New York City become a major trading center. Although railroads later carried more freight, the canal showed how transportation projects can connect regions and change daily life.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE Use the passage

- 1 What definition does the writer provide for the word canal? Explain how this definition helps develop the topic.

- 2 Why did builders use locks? Use the elevation fact and the description of a lock in your answer.

- 3 Name two concrete details about the workers or their tools. How do these details develop paragraph 2?

- 4 Which sentence from paragraph 3 best supports the idea that the canal changed communities? What does it show?

3 YOUR TURN Your own words

Write one explanatory paragraph of 80 to 100 words about how a school compost bin turns food scraps into useful soil. Include a definition of compost, at least two accurate facts or concrete details, and one example of how the finished compost can be used.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline the definition of a key word, circle four facts or concrete details, and put a star beside two details that show the canal's effects. These kinds of information develop an explanatory topic. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What definition does the writer provide for the word canal? Explain how this definition helps develop the topic.	A canal is a human-made channel that carries boats. The definition helps readers understand what the Erie Canal was before learning about its construction and effects.
2	Why did builders use locks? Use the elevation fact and the description of a lock in your answer.	The land rises about 571 feet between the Hudson River and Lake Erie, so boats had to move uphill or downhill. Locks filled with water to raise boats and emptied to lower them.
3	Name two concrete details about the workers or their tools. How do these details develop paragraph 2?	Workers used shovels, picks, horses, and wheelbarrows, and many were Irish immigrants. These details show the labor and equipment needed to build the canal.
4	Which sentence from paragraph 3 best supports the idea that the canal changed communities? What does it show?	"Towns such as Rochester and Buffalo grew beside the canal." It shows that communities near the canal expanded.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Compost is a mixture of decayed plant materials that can improve soil. In a school compost bin, students can add fruit and vegetable scraps, dry leaves, and grass clippings. Meat and dairy products should stay out because they can smell and attract animals. Tiny organisms break down the materials when the pile has air and moisture. After several months, the dark, crumbly compost can be mixed into a garden bed. For example, gardeners can use it around tomato plants to help the soil hold water and nutrients.

Accept equivalent explanations that identify relevant facts, definitions, and concrete details from the passage. For the writing task, accept accurate topics other than compost only if the response still meets every required detail and word-count requirement.