Drought Evidence File

Use details from an informational text to build a careful analysis.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.11-12.9 "Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each claim the author makes, then circle a detail that supports or qualifies that claim. Your marks should help you separate evidence from conclusions.

Cape Town's Water Crisis

1 After Cape Town, South Africa, faced a severe drought in 2018, officials warned that reservoirs could reach "Day Zero," when most household taps would be shut off. The city imposed limits of 50 liters of water per person each day, publicized reservoir levels, and raised water tariffs for heavy use. Residents responded by shortening showers, collecting some household water for reuse, and reporting leaks. Rainfall later helped refill reservoirs, but consumption had already fallen sharply. The crisis became a case study for cities planning for drought, because it showed both the power and the limits of changing daily behavior.

2 Evidence from the crisis supports the idea that clear public information can influence conservation. During the drought, Cape Town published weekly dam-level reports and used a widely shared online water map that displayed neighborhood use. Researchers studying the response found that citywide water demand dropped substantially from pre-drought levels. However, the evidence does not prove that public messages alone caused the decline. Mandatory limits, higher charges, fear of Day Zero, and repairs to municipal pipes occurred at the same time. A careful analysis should treat communication as one likely factor rather than claim it was the single solution.

3 Another lesson concerns fairness. A 50-liter daily limit affected households differently: people living in crowded homes, people with medical needs, and residents without reliable plumbing could face greater difficulty meeting it. City programs distributed water-saving devices and tried to reduce leaks, yet unequal access to money, storage space, and efficient appliances remained important. This evidence complicates a simple judgment that every resident had an equal ability to conserve. When researchers use Cape Town as evidence for another city, they must compare local rainfall, infrastructure, income patterns, and public services. A policy that succeeds in one place may require changes before it works fairly elsewhere.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What claim does paragraph 2 make about public information and water conservation? Use two details from the paragraph to explain why the author does not present communication as the only cause of lower water use.

2. Choose one detail from paragraph 3 that challenges the idea that every resident could conserve water equally. Explain how that detail challenges the idea.

3. How does the information in paragraph 1 that rainfall helped refill reservoirs affect an analysis that gives all credit for recovery to conservation?

4. Using evidence from paragraphs 2 and 3, explain why researchers should not copy Cape Town's drought policy unchanged in another city.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a three-sentence recommendation for a fictional city preparing for drought. State a policy claim, use one evidence detail from paragraph 2 and one from paragraph 3, and explain how the city should account for a local condition.

ANSWER KEY

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HIGH SCHOOL · WHST.11-12.9

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline each claim the author makes, then circle a detail that supports or qualifies that claim. Your marks should help you separate evidence from conclusions. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What claim does paragraph 2 make about public information and water conservation? Use two details from the paragraph to explain why the author does not present communication as the only cause of lower water use.	**The author claims that public information likely helped conservation but was not the only cause. Weekly dam reports and an online water map appeared alongside lower demand, but mandatory limits, higher charges, fear of Day Zero, and pipe repairs also occurred.**
2	Choose one detail from paragraph 3 that challenges the idea that every resident could conserve water equally. Explain how that detail challenges the idea.	**People with medical needs could have greater difficulty meeting the 50-liter limit. This shows that the same limit could place unequal burdens on different households.**
3	How does the information in paragraph 1 that rainfall helped refill reservoirs affect an analysis that gives all credit for recovery to conservation?	**Rainfall is another factor in reservoir recovery, so conservation alone cannot receive all the credit. The paragraph also states that consumption had already fallen sharply, which supports the conclusion that conservation still mattered.**
4	Using evidence from paragraphs 2 and 3, explain why researchers should not copy Cape Town's drought policy unchanged in another city.	**Paragraph 2 shows that several actions worked together, not just public messages. Paragraph 3 shows that local conditions, including infrastructure, income patterns, and household needs, can affect whether a policy works fairly.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Riverton should pair water-use limits with public reporting rather than rely on announcements alone. In Cape Town, weekly dam reports and an online map appeared alongside a substantial drop in water demand, but limits and higher charges also occurred. Riverton should adapt assistance for crowded households and residents with medical needs, especially if local plumbing is unreliable.

Accept recommendations that make a clear policy claim and accurately use one relevant detail from each required paragraph. Students may choose different local conditions if they explain how that condition could affect fairness or success.