Make Every Word Count

Revise a composting guide for clarity and precision.

7.W.2.d "Choose language and content-specific vocabulary that express ideas precisely and concisely, recognizing and eliminating wordiness and redundancy."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the three quoted draft sentences in the passage. Circle words in each one that are vague, repeated, or longer than needed.

A Clearer Compost Guide

1. At the school garden, a seventh-grade class writes a guide to composting. Their first draft says, "We put various kinds of stuff into the bin each and every week." Each week, the class adds fruit peels, vegetable scraps, and dry leaves. Naming those materials helps readers know what belongs in the bin. The guide also tells students to keep meat and dairy out because they can attract pests. A clear guide gives useful details without making readers sort through extra words.

2. Before adding scraps, students tear dry leaves into small pieces. Then they spread the leaves over the fresh scraps to help control odors and keep fruit flies away. One draft instruction reads, "In order to make sure that the scraps are covered, place a layer of leaves on top of the scraps." It describes a real step, but its long opening slows the reader. The class checks each sentence against what students actually do at the bin. Shorter wording should still name the action and the material.

3. After several months, the bottom of the bin holds dark, crumbly compost. The class plans to mix that finished compost into the garden soil. A draft sentence says, "It goes into the soil, which is the place where plants grow." A new student might not know what "it" means. The guide must name the finished material, not just point to it. The writers also avoid promising that compost will make every plant grow faster. Compost can improve soil, but plant growth depends on other conditions too.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Rewrite the quoted sentence in paragraph 1. Name all three materials, keep the weekly schedule, and remove vague or repeated words.

2. Rewrite the quoted instruction in paragraph 2 in 12 words or fewer. Keep the action and the material.

3. Rewrite the quoted sentence in paragraph 3 so readers know what goes into the soil. Remove the unnecessary explanation of soil.

4. Why is "Compost makes every plant grow faster" less precise than the final sentence of the passage? Answer in one sentence.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a three-sentence mini-guide for caring for a classroom plant. Use at least two precise terms about the plant or its care, and leave out vague words and repeated ideas.

ANSWER KEY

Make Every Word Count

GRADE 7 · 7.W.2.d

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the three quoted draft sentences in the passage. Circle words in each one that are vague, repeated, or longer than needed. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Rewrite the quoted sentence in paragraph 1. Name all three materials, keep the weekly schedule, and remove vague or repeated words.	**Each week, we add fruit peels, vegetable scraps, and dry leaves to the bin.**
2	Rewrite the quoted instruction in paragraph 2 in 12 words or fewer. Keep the action and the material.	**Cover the scraps with a layer of dry leaves.**
3	Rewrite the quoted sentence in paragraph 3 so readers know what goes into the soil. Remove the unnecessary explanation of soil.	**Mix the finished compost into the garden soil.**
4	Why is "Compost makes every plant grow faster" less precise than the final sentence of the passage? Answer in one sentence.	**Plant growth depends on other conditions, so compost cannot guarantee faster growth for every plant.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Check the soil with your finger before watering the classroom pothos. If the top inch feels dry, add water until a little drains from the pot. Empty the saucer so the roots do not sit in water.

Accept revisions that preserve the passage's facts while replacing vague language and cutting redundancy. For Part 3, accept any accurate three-sentence plant-care guide with at least two specific terms and no needless repetition.