# Cut the Clutter

Make an informative report more precise.

**8.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 three rain-garden terms that name a specific process or material. Circle three phrases you could shorten without losing information.

### A Garden That Catches Rain

1 A rain garden is a shallow planted basin that collects runoff from roofs and pavement. During a storm, water travels downhill into the garden instead of rushing straight into a drain. The basin holds the water for a short period of time before it sinks into the soil. This delay can ease pressure on storm pipes when heavy rain falls. A garden beside a school sidewalk can also catch water from a nearby roof, keeping puddles away from the doorway where students enter the building each morning.

2 Under the mulch, soil and roots help the garden work. Mulch traps sediment, tiny pieces of soil carried by moving water. As water enters the ground, infiltration keeps some runoff from reaching a storm drain. Native plants are suited to local conditions, and their roots help hold soil in place. A gardener should remove weeds, clear litter, and pick up trash so water can reach the basin. During a very heavy storm, the garden may overflow, so an outlet directs extra water away from buildings and walking paths.

3 Students can use the garden as an outdoor lab. After a storm, they can measure the length of time in minutes that water remains on the surface and compare it with the next storm. They might count insects visiting flowers, but one count cannot show what happens in every season. In a report, measurements make a stronger claim than a vague phrase such as 'lots of bugs.' A record of six bees on Tuesday describes one observation; it does not prove that all pollinators benefit from the garden.

## 2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Rewrite the sentence about how long the basin holds water. Shorten 'for a short period of time' without changing its meaning.

2. In the gardener's list of tasks, which words repeat the idea of 'clear litter'? Rewrite that part of the list without the repetition.

3. Rewrite 'measure the length of time in minutes that water remains on the surface' in fewer words. Keep what the students measure.

4. Replace 'lots of bugs' with the specific observation in the passage. Why is the new wording more precise?

## 3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write 3 or 4 sentences explaining one way your school could reduce food waste at lunch. Use at least two precise food-waste terms, include one concrete detail, and avoid repeated or unnecessary words.

ANSWER KEY

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GRADE 8 · 8.W.2.d

## PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline three rain-garden terms that name a specific process or material. Circle three phrases you could shorten without losing information. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

## PART 2 · ANSWERS

| # | QUESTION | ANSWER |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Rewrite the sentence about how long the basin holds water. Shorten 'for a short period of time' without changing its meaning. | **The basin holds the water briefly before it sinks into the soil.** |
| 2 | In the gardener's list of tasks, which words repeat the idea of 'clear litter'? Rewrite that part of the list without the repetition. | **'Pick up trash' repeats the idea. The list can read 'remove weeds and clear litter.'** |
| 3 | Rewrite 'measure the length of time in minutes that water remains on the surface' in fewer words. Keep what the students measure. | **Measure how many minutes water remains on the surface.** |
| 4 | Replace 'lots of bugs' with the specific observation in the passage. Why is the new wording more precise? | **Six bees visited on Tuesday. This gives a number, a kind of insect, and a day.** |

## PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Our cafeteria could offer fruit in smaller portions so students take only what they plan to eat. Staff could weigh the fruit leftovers each Friday to track food waste. If fewer kilograms of fruit are discarded over several weeks, the smaller portions may be helping.

For the marking task, accept precise terms such as runoff, sediment, infiltration, and mulch. Accept any three phrases that can be shortened without losing meaning, including the phrases addressed in questions 1 through 3.