

From Scraps to Soil

See how an informational writer builds a clear topic with facts.

3W2 "Write informative/explanatory texts to explore a topic and convey ideas and information relevant to the subject."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the sentence in each paragraph that states its main idea, and circle the details that explain or support that idea.

How Composting Helps

- ① Composting turns some food scraps and yard waste into a dark, crumbly material that helps plants grow. Instead of sending apple cores and dry leaves to a landfill, people can place them in a compost bin. Tiny living things in the bin break the materials down over time. Composting is one way families and schools can reduce waste.
- ② A compost bin needs a mix of wet, green materials and dry, brown materials. Fruit peels, vegetable scraps, and grass clippings are green materials. Dry leaves, small twigs, and shredded plain paper are brown materials. Meat, dairy foods, and oily foods should stay out because they can smell bad and attract animals. Turning the pile adds air and helps it break down.
- ③ When the materials have broken down, the compost looks like soil and has an earthy smell. A gardener can spread it around flowers or mix it into garden soil. Compost adds organic matter, which can help soil hold water. By collecting the right materials and caring for the pile, people can make useful compost from things they might have thrown away.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What topic does the first paragraph introduce?

2 Which sentence explains why meat, dairy foods, and oily foods should stay out of a compost bin?

3 How does the writer organize the information in paragraph 2?

4 What detail in paragraph 3 explains one way compost helps soil?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write one informative paragraph of 5 or 6 sentences about a way to save water at home or school. Begin with a clear topic sentence, add at least three facts or examples, and end with a sentence that wraps up your idea.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline the sentence in each paragraph that states its main idea, and circle the details that explain or support that idea. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What topic does the first paragraph introduce?	Composting, or turning food scraps and yard waste into material that helps plants grow.
2	Which sentence explains why meat, dairy foods, and oily foods should stay out of a compost bin?	Meat, dairy foods, and oily foods should stay out because they can smell bad and attract animals.
3	How does the writer organize the information in paragraph 2?	The writer groups materials into green and brown examples, then tells which foods to leave out and why.
4	What detail in paragraph 3 explains one way compost helps soil?	Compost adds organic matter, which can help soil hold water.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Saving water at school is an important job. Turn off the faucet while you soap your hands so clean water does not keep running. Tell an adult if you see a dripping faucet. Use a refillable bottle instead of letting the water fountain run while you choose a drink. These small actions can save water every day.

Accept accurate paraphrases for the short-answer questions. For the paragraph, look for a clear topic, at least three relevant details or examples, and a closing sentence.