Words That Work

Read a model proposal, then choose language that makes a solution clear.

10.4.W.1 "Students will use precise, grade-level vocabulary in writing to clearly communicate complex ideas."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Circle four precise words that distinguish how water moves or when the garden has limits. Underline a nearby phrase that helps explain each word.

A Garden for Stormwater

1 After a heavy storm, water races across the paved courtyard at West Creek High. The pavement is impermeable, so most rain cannot soak through it; instead, the runoff carries loose soil and litter toward a street drain. A student team proposes replacing a narrow strip of pavement with a rain garden, a shallow planted area that receives water from nearby hard surfaces. This is not a decorative pond. Its purpose is to slow runoff and give some water time to infiltrate the soil, reducing the volume that reaches the drain during smaller storms.

2 To test the idea, the team studies where water collects and where the ground drains well. They select deep-rooted plants that can survive both wet spells and dry weeks, then add a layer of mulch to limit erosion. The garden will detain runoff briefly, not store it indefinitely. Water can infiltrate the soil, while plants take up a portion through their roots. These verbs describe different processes, so calling both of them "soaking up" would hide an important distinction. If the soil becomes saturated, extra water must have a safe route to the existing drain.

3 The proposal also makes a measured claim about results. A rain garden can reduce runoff from its immediate drainage area, but it cannot prevent every flood in the neighborhood. During a short shower, the soil may accept much of the incoming water; during an intense storm, overflow may still reach the street. The team recommends clearing litter from the inlet and checking for clogged soil after storms. These maintenance steps protect the garden's capacity over time. By naming the conditions and limits, the students present a practical improvement rather than promising a perfect solution.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why is “impermeable” more precise than “hard” when describing the courtyard pavement?

2. Why does the writer say the garden will “detain” runoff rather than “store” it?

3. Which two processes would “soaking up” blur? Explain the difference using the passage.

4. Replace “The garden stops floods” with one accurate sentence about the garden. Use both “runoff” and “overflow.”

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Choose a school problem other than stormwater and write five or six sentences proposing a solution. Use at least three precise terms, explain what causes the problem, and identify a limitation of your solution and how you would address it.

ANSWER KEY

Words That Work

GRADE 10 · 10.4.W.1

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Circle four precise words that distinguish how water moves or when the garden has limits. Underline a nearby phrase that helps explain each word. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why is “impermeable” more precise than “hard” when describing the courtyard pavement?	**“Impermeable” explains that rain cannot soak through the pavement. “Hard” does not specify what happens to the water.**
2	Why does the writer say the garden will “detain” runoff rather than “store” it?	**The garden holds runoff briefly so some can enter the soil; it does not keep the water indefinitely.**
3	Which two processes would “soaking up” blur? Explain the difference using the passage.	**Infiltration is water entering the soil. Plant uptake is water moving into roots.**
4	Replace “The garden stops floods” with one accurate sentence about the garden. Use both “runoff” and “overflow.”	**The garden can reduce runoff during smaller storms, but overflow may still reach the street during an intense storm.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I propose moving the backpack drop-off point away from the narrow entrance to the science wing. Students who stop to unpack there create a bottleneck, which delays people moving in both directions. A marked waiting area beside the wider wall would separate stationary students from foot traffic. This change redirects the queue rather than simply telling students to walk faster. However, the waiting area could block a classroom door if it extends too far. Staff could mark its boundary short of that door and review congestion after a week.

Accept other passage-supported explanations and accurate rewrites. For Part 3, look for terms that clarify the cause, proposed action, and limitation rather than simply sounding formal.