Beneath the Street

Read closely, then summarize a proposal and its tradeoffs.

12.2.R.1 "Students will summarize the main ideas and paraphrase significant parts of increasingly complex texts."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one sentence in each paragraph that carries a central idea, circle words that limit a benefit or risk, and number your underlined sentences in the order you would use them in a summary.

Should a Buried Stream Return?

1. On many city blocks, a stream still runs beneath the street. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, cities often sent small waterways into pipes to make room for roads and buildings. That choice did not erase the watershed: rain still moves downhill toward the former channel. When intense storms send more water into a pipe than it can carry, water can back up onto streets or into basements. Today, some cities consider daylighting, or bringing a buried stream back to the surface. The appealing picture of an open channel, however, begins with a less visible problem: where the stormwater will go.

2. An open channel can give stormwater more space to spread and can be paired with planted areas that absorb some runoff. If the channel has suitable water and habitat, it may also support insects, birds, and other wildlife. Yet uncovering a stream does not make every flood disappear. A narrow corridor may still overflow during an extreme storm, and hard surfaces elsewhere in the watershed continue to send rain downhill. Water quality matters, too: if polluted runoff reaches the channel, simply exposing the water could create new problems rather than a pleasant public space.

3. Deciding whether to uncover a stream therefore requires more than comparing a pipe with a park. Engineers must check underground utilities and calculate how much water the proposed channel could carry. Residents may value shade and a walking path while also worrying about construction, safety, or the loss of parking. If land near the stream becomes more desirable, rising costs could put pressure on current tenants. A city can weigh other options, such as enlarging pipes or reducing runoff across the watershed. The strongest plan explains whose risks shrink, whose costs rise, and how those effects will be measured.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. In your own words, explain why putting a stream in a pipe did not eliminate the problem of stormwater.

2. Paraphrase the second paragraph's qualified claim about what an open channel could accomplish.

3. Why might residents disagree about a project that adds shade and a walking path? Paraphrase two concerns from the passage.

4. Summarize the passage's main argument in one or two sentences.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write an 80 to 100 word public-comment statement from the viewpoint of a renter near a buried stream. Summarize why the city might uncover it, paraphrase at least two limitations from different paragraphs, and state a passage-based condition for your support.

ANSWER KEY

Beneath the Street

GRADE 12 · 12.2.R.1

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one sentence in each paragraph that carries a central idea, circle words that limit a benefit or risk, and number your underlined sentences in the order you would use them in a summary. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	In your own words, explain why putting a stream in a pipe did not eliminate the problem of stormwater.	**Rain still drains toward the stream's former route, and storms can send more water into the pipe than it can hold.**
2	Paraphrase the second paragraph's qualified claim about what an open channel could accomplish.	**An open channel and planted areas could manage some runoff and, under suitable conditions, provide habitat. They would not prevent every flood, and polluted water could create problems.**
3	Why might residents disagree about a project that adds shade and a walking path? Paraphrase two concerns from the passage.	**Some residents might worry about construction, safety, or lost parking. Current tenants could also face pressure if nearby housing costs rise.**
4	Summarize the passage's main argument in one or two sentences.	**Uncovering a buried stream may help manage runoff and create habitat, but its benefits depend on local conditions. Cities should compare it with other options and account for flooding, water quality, and effects on residents.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

As a renter near the buried creek, I understand why the city is considering opening it: the pipe can be overwhelmed when heavy rain follows the old stream's route. A surface channel with planted ground might hold some runoff and offer habitat. Still, an extreme storm could flood a narrow channel, and polluted runoff could make the site unpleasant. I would support the project only if the city tests the water and shows how it will protect current tenants from rising housing costs. Those details matter as much as the appealing idea of a new green space.

Accept accurate paraphrases that preserve the passage's qualifications. For the public comment, look for a clear summary, two limitations drawn from different paragraphs, and a condition grounded in the text.