Words That Work

Study how precise words explain a school rain garden.

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

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline six specific nouns or verbs that help you picture how the rain garden works. Number the words 1 to 6 so you can refer to them in your answers.

Where the Rain Goes

1 After a storm, a shallow puddle used to spread across the school courtyard. Students stepped around it, and muddy water slid toward a street drain. Last spring, the gardening club replaced a strip of packed dirt with a rain garden. First, they loosened the soil and shaped a shallow basin beside the walkway. Then they planted native grasses and flowers. The curved edge guides runoff into the basin instead of letting it race across the pavement. A layer of mulch shields the soil from pounding raindrops.

2 When rain falls, the basin collects water for a short time. The loose soil lets some of that water seep underground, where plant roots can absorb it. Mulch slows the flow at the surface, so fewer soil particles wash away. The grasses have deep roots that help hold the soil in place. During a heavy storm, the basin may fill faster than the ground can absorb water. An outlet at one end lets extra water spill toward the street drain rather than over the walkway.

3 Two weeks after the garden was planted, another storm swept through at dismissal. Water streamed from the roof and trickled along the path into the basin. The garden did not make the rain disappear. Instead, it held some runoff long enough for the soil to absorb it. By morning, the walkway was clear, and damp mulch rested between the grasses. In their report, the club avoided saying the garden "fixed the water problem." They described where the runoff went and what the basin did.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why is “basin” more precise than “hole” for describing the part the club shaped?

2. Which verb in paragraph 2 tells you that water moves slowly into the ground? Why would “went” be less clear?

3. Which two verbs in paragraph 3 show different ways water moved? Explain the difference using the places named.

4. Replace “The garden did something to extra water” with one precise sentence based on paragraph 2. Include at least two details.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write four sentences about a different school improvement, such as a bike rack, shaded bench, or refill station. Explain what it changes and how it works, using at least four precise nouns or verbs, and underline those words.

ANSWER KEY # Words That Work

GRADE 6 · 6.4.W.1

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline six specific nouns or verbs that help you picture how the rain garden works. Number the words 1 to 6 so you can refer to them in your answers. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why is “basin” more precise than “hole” for describing the part the club shaped?	**The passage describes the basin as a shallow, shaped area that collects runoff. “Hole” does not make its shape or purpose as clear.**
2	Which verb in paragraph 2 tells you that water moves slowly into the ground? Why would “went” be less clear?	**“Seep” shows water moving slowly through the soil. “Went” does not tell how the water moved.**
3	Which two verbs in paragraph 3 show different ways water moved? Explain the difference using the places named.	**Water “streamed” from the roof, suggesting a stronger flow, and “trickled” along the path into the basin, suggesting a smaller flow.**
4	Replace “The garden did something to extra water” with one precise sentence based on paragraph 2. Include at least two details.	**When the basin fills during a heavy storm, an outlet lets extra water spill toward the street drain instead of over the walkway.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Our school installed a refill station beside the gym. Its spout pours water directly into a reusable bottle. A sensor starts the flow when someone holds a bottle beneath it. The station reduces the need for disposable bottles and refills containers quickly.

For questions 1 through 3, accept explanations that accurately distinguish what the passage’s words communicate. For question 4 and Your Turn, check that the details are clear and that the chosen nouns or verbs add useful precision.