Words at Work

Precise words in a school garden account

7.4.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 Read the passage. Underline four precise words that help you picture the garden problem or its repair, then number them 1 to 4.

After the Rain

1 After Tuesday's storm, a shallow puddle covered the path beside our school garden. Rainwater had flowed off the sloped sidewalk and carried gritty soil into the beds. By lunch, a thin crust of mud had dried around the lettuce seedlings. Our class wanted to protect the plants without blocking the path. We traced the water's route from the sidewalk to a low spot near the fence. At that spot, the soil felt hard and packed, so little water could soak in.

2 First, we loosened the compacted soil with hand trowels, taking care not to disturb the lettuce roots. Next, we shaped a shallow channel along the edge of the path. The channel guided runoff toward an empty patch beyond the beds instead of letting it wash across them. We spread shredded leaves over the bare soil to reduce splashing during the next storm. Before leaving, we pressed wooden stakes into the ground to show where the new channel began and ended.

3 On Thursday, another shower gave us a chance to test our work. Water trickled through the channel, while the path stayed clear enough for students to walk beside the garden. A few leaves floated away, but the lettuce beds held their soil. We replaced the missing leaves and widened one narrow section of the channel with a trowel. Our notes described the result precisely: the water reached the empty patch, and no fresh mud formed around the seedlings. Now we can adjust the channel if another storm changes its course.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Which adjective in paragraph 1 helps you picture the soil carried into the beds? What detail does it add?

2. Which word in paragraph 2 names water flowing off a surface? Why is it more precise than "water"?

3. Which verb in paragraph 3 shows how water moved through the channel? What does it tell you about the movement?

4. Replace "changed" with the exact verb from paragraph 3: "We changed one narrow section of the channel with a trowel." What does that verb tell you?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write four sentences about organizing a crowded locker or desk. Use at least four precise words, including two action verbs and two words that name or describe specific objects, to show what you did and the result.

Words at Work

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Read the passage. Underline four precise words that help you picture the garden problem or its repair, then number them 1 to 4. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Which adjective in paragraph 1 helps you picture the soil carried into the beds? What detail does it add?	**Gritty describes the soil's rough, grainy texture.**
2	Which word in paragraph 2 names water flowing off a surface? Why is it more precise than "water"?	**Runoff names water that flows off a surface, not just water in general.**
3	Which verb in paragraph 3 shows how water moved through the channel? What does it tell you about the movement?	**Trickled shows that the water flowed slowly in a small stream.**
4	Replace "changed" with the exact verb from paragraph 3: "We changed one narrow section of the channel with a trowel." What does that verb tell you?	**Widened tells the reader that the students made the narrow section broader.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

My locker was crowded with loose worksheets and a bent folder. I sorted the worksheets by subject and clipped each stack together. Then I slid my math binder onto the lower shelf and tucked my pencil case beside it. The door closed smoothly, and I could reach the binder without moving anything else.

For the marking job, accept precise words that help a reader picture the problem or repair, such as "shallow," "gritty," "compacted," and "widened." For Your Turn, check for four sentences and at least two precise action verbs plus two words that name or describe specific objects.