Scraps to Soil

How voice and parallel actions shape a scene

9.5.W.1 "Students will use or revise for active/passive voice and parallel structure in words and phrases for effect."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the three passive verb phrases, circle the three matching action verbs in the paragraph 1 sentence beginning "They measured," and number the three commands on the sign in paragraph 3.

The Bin Beside the Greenhouse

1 On Monday, the garden club rolled a wooden compost bin beside the school greenhouse. The bin had been built from leftover boards by the maintenance crew. Inside, students layered apple cores, carrot tops, and dry leaves. They measured the pile, recorded its temperature, and turned it with a shovel. Those three jobs took less than fifteen minutes, but they changed what happened after lunch. Instead of sending every plant scrap to the trash, the club gave some scraps a new use. The bin sat in plain view, so other students could watch the pile slowly change.

2 During the first week, the pile looked more like a lunch tray than soil. A few students wanted to add cheese crusts, but the club kept meat and dairy out of the bin to avoid attracting pests. Dry leaves were spread over the fresh scraps after each collection. The leaves covered exposed food, while gaps between larger pieces let air move through the pile. By Friday, the center felt warm. Bacteria and fungi were breaking down the scraps, and the club kept the mixture damp but not soaked. Each visit called for patience, attention, and a sturdy shovel.

3 Six weeks later, the club sifted the dark material and returned unfinished pieces to the bin. The finished compost was carried to the greenhouse by two ninth graders. There, they mixed it into a garden bed before planting lettuce seeds. The group posted a sign that read, "Sort the scraps, tend the pile, feed the soil." Its quick commands made the routine easy for visitors to remember. By afternoon, a few students who had never joined the club were asking where to put their apple cores. The bin had become more than a container for waste.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Who built the bin? Rewrite the sentence about its construction in active voice, keeping all its facts.

2. Why might the writer use passive voice in the sentence about dry leaves being spread, rather than write, "The club spread dry leaves over the fresh scraps after each collection"?

3. Copy the three parallel action verbs in the sentence beginning "They measured." How does their matching form affect the pace?

4. Rewrite the sign's three commands as one sentence beginning "The club." Keep all three actions as parallel past-tense verbs.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Choose a task outside the garden. In three sentences, describe it using at least one active-voice sentence, one passive-voice sentence, and a series of three parallel actions.

ANSWER KEY # Scraps to Soil

GRADE 9 · 9.5.W.1

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the three passive verb phrases, circle the three matching action verbs in the paragraph 1 sentence beginning "They measured," and number the three commands on the sign in paragraph 3. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Who built the bin? Rewrite the sentence about its construction in active voice, keeping all its facts.	**The maintenance crew built the bin from leftover boards.**
2	Why might the writer use passive voice in the sentence about dry leaves being spread, rather than write, "The club spread dry leaves over the fresh scraps after each collection"?	**The passive sentence puts the dry leaves and what happened to them first, rather than the club.**
3	Copy the three parallel action verbs in the sentence beginning "They measured." How does their matching form affect the pace?	**Measured, recorded, and turned. Their matching form makes the work read like a quick, orderly sequence.**
4	Rewrite the sign's three commands as one sentence beginning "The club." Keep all three actions as parallel past-tense verbs.	**The club sorted the scraps, tended the pile, and fed the soil.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Before the concert, Nia checked the microphones, tested the lights, and arranged the chairs. The stage curtain was raised just before the first song. The audience greeted the band with loud applause.

Accept other accurate shifts in focus for question 2. For the open task, check that the three actions share a grammatical form and that the passive sentence uses a form of "be" plus a past participle.