Decisions at Plymouth

How William Bradford led a struggling settlement

5.C.1.8.C "leadership of William Bradford."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline three decisions Bradford made as governor, and circle one result of a decision to show how his leadership affected Plymouth.

Leading Plymouth

1. In 1620, the Mayflower brought English settlers to the coast of present-day Massachusetts. They founded Plymouth, but cold weather, hunger, and illness made their first winter deadly. After Governor John Carver died in 1621, the settlers chose William Bradford as governor. Bradford had to help a small community make decisions while it faced serious danger. He served as governor for many years, though not every year.

2. Food was one of Bradford's hardest problems. At first, the settlers planted and shared crops as a group. In 1623, Bradford and other leaders assigned families their own plots to plant. Bradford reported that people worked harder and grew more food under this plan. The Wampanoag had already taught settlers ways to grow local crops. Their knowledge also helped Plymouth survive.

3. Bradford also led when the settlement faced threats and shortages. As governor, he helped organize Plymouth's defense and sent people to trade for food. He kept a written account of the colony's early years, including its struggles and its contacts with Native peoples. That account helps historians study his decisions, but it tells events mainly from a settler's point of view.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why did Plymouth need a leader when Bradford became governor?

2. What planting decision did Bradford and other leaders make, and what result did Bradford report?

3. What two actions did Bradford take when Plymouth faced threats and food shortages?

4. How does Bradford's written account help people study his leadership, and why should they read it with care?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine advising Bradford during a food shortage. In four sentences, propose a new action he could take, use one fact from the passage to support your plan, explain how it could help, and show how he could treat Wampanoag neighbors with respect.

ANSWER KEY

Decisions at Plymouth

GRADE 5 · 5.C.1.8.C

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline three decisions Bradford made as governor, and circle one result of a decision to show how his leadership affected Plymouth. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why did Plymouth need a leader when Bradford became governor?	**Governor Carver had died, and the settlers faced hunger, illness, and danger.**
2	What planting decision did Bradford and other leaders make, and what result did Bradford report?	**They assigned families their own plots. Bradford reported that people worked harder and grew more food.**
3	What two actions did Bradford take when Plymouth faced threats and food shortages?	**He helped organize the settlement's defense and sent people to trade for food.**
4	How does Bradford's written account help people study his leadership, and why should they read it with care?	**It records his decisions, but it tells events mainly from a settler's point of view.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Bradford could ask each family to save a small part of its harvest in a shared food store. Families already had their own plots, so each could contribute from what it grew. The stored food could help households during a poor harvest. He could ask Wampanoag neighbors whether they wished to share farming advice and offer fair payment for their time.

Accept other practical new actions supported by a passage fact. Responses should explain a possible benefit and treat Wampanoag neighbors as people who could choose whether to help.