

Build a Better Explanation

See how a writer organizes information for a clear purpose.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3.4 "With guidance and support from adults, produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1-3 above.)"

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the opening topic sentence. Write 'care steps' beside paragraph 2 and circle the closing idea in paragraph 3. Notice how each paragraph helps explain the project.

A Compost Bin for Our Garden

- ① A compost bin can help our school garden grow. Compost is made from old plant materials that break down over time. Our class could collect fruit and vegetable scraps, dry leaves, and grass clippings in a covered bin. We would keep meat, cheese, and plastic out because those items can cause problems in the bin.
- ② To care for the compost, we would add a layer of dry leaves after adding wet food scraps. Then we would stir the materials with a garden tool every week. Air helps tiny living things break down the scraps. If the bin seems dry, we would sprinkle in a little water, not enough to make a puddle.
- ③ After several months, the compost can become dark and crumbly. We could mix this finished compost into the garden soil before planting seeds. It would add useful material to the soil and keep some scraps out of the trash. A compost bin is a simple project that can help our garden and teach our class about nature.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

- 1 What is the writer's purpose for this explanation?

2 Which materials does the writer say may go into the compost bin?

3 How does paragraph 2 help organize the explanation?

4 How does paragraph 3 work as a closing paragraph?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

With an adult's help, write a three-paragraph explanation of how your class can save water at school. Introduce the idea, give at least two useful steps or details, and close by explaining the result. Write 60-90 words in all. Explain the steps in your own words so another class can follow them.

1. Talk and plan with an adult

Tell an adult your purpose and two ideas. Ask for help putting them in a clear order. Write the adult's name or role and one helpful suggestion below.

2. Write your explanation

Use the help you received. Write three short paragraphs: introduce the idea, explain the steps, and close with the result. Leave a blank line between paragraphs. Read your writing to the adult and check that the steps are clear.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slight shadow on the right side, suggesting it's resting on a surface. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline the opening topic sentence. Write 'care steps' beside paragraph 2 and circle the closing idea in paragraph 3. Notice how each paragraph helps explain the project. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What is the writer's purpose for this explanation?	To explain how a class can use and care for a compost bin and why it helps.
2	Which materials does the writer say may go into the compost bin?	Fruit and vegetable scraps, dry leaves, and grass clippings.
3	How does paragraph 2 help organize the explanation?	It gives steps for caring for the compost, including adding dry leaves, stirring it, and adding a little water if needed.
4	How does paragraph 3 work as a closing paragraph?	It explains what finished compost can do and summarizes how the project helps the garden and class.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Adult support example: Teacher: Put the two actions together in the middle paragraph. End by telling what those actions can do. This shows one possible discussion; students must talk with an actual adult.

Explanation: Our class can save water every day at school. Saving water helps protect a resource that people, plants, and animals need.

First, turn off the faucet while soaping hands, then turn it on to rinse. Next, tell an adult if a sink drips or a drinking fountain leaks. These small actions can stop water from being wasted.

When our class works together, we can use less water and care for our school.

TEACHER ASSESSMENT NOTES

Arrange actual adult support before assigning the writing. The adult helps the child choose or order ideas and listens to the completed explanation; an imagined adult comment does not meet this part of the task. Accept a clear topic, two useful steps and a closing result in three real paragraphs, 60-90 words total. The model has 72 words; the separate adult-support example is not part of that count. For the reading, accept equivalent descriptions of topic, care steps and closing. This is a writing activity, not an instruction to start composting without adult help. Background: U.S. EPA, <https://www.epa.gov/recycle/composting-home> and <https://www.epa.gov/watersense/watersense-kids>. Turn off running water while scrubbing and turn it back on to rinse; report leaks to an adult.