

Gardens Above Streets

Explain an idea in a developed informational essay.

7.11.B “compose informational texts, including multi-paragraph essays that convey information about a topic, using a clear controlling idea or thesis statement and genre characteristics and craft;”

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the controlling idea in paragraph 1. Circle the first sentence of paragraphs 2 and 3, then number two details in each of those paragraphs that support the controlling idea.

Why Rooftop Gardens Matter

- ① Rooftop gardens can make crowded cities healthier by cooling buildings, managing rainwater, and creating places for people and wildlife. On a bare roof, dark materials absorb sunlight and heat the rooms below. Plants shade the surface and release water vapor, which can lower the roof's temperature. This natural cooling may reduce the need for air conditioning during hot weather. A garden also turns unused space into a living layer that residents can value.
- ② Rooftop gardens also help cities handle storms. Plants and their growing material retain some rainfall before it rushes into storm drains. The water then evaporates, passes through plants, or drains through the growing material, lowering the amount that enters pipes at one time. This matters because overloaded drains can contribute to street flooding. Designers choose suitable growing material and include protective barriers and drainage. The building must support the system's weight, and the plants need care; a roof garden is more than soil spread on an ordinary roof.
- ③ These gardens can also support city life in ways that are easy to miss from the sidewalk. Flowers may provide nectar for bees and butterflies, while taller plants offer shelter for small birds. Some schools and apartment buildings use rooftop gardens to grow herbs or vegetables and teach people how food grows. Rooftop gardens are not a complete answer to every city problem, but they are a practical use of space that can cool, protect, and enliven a neighborhood.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE Use the passage

1 What is the controlling idea of the passage?

2 How do the details in paragraph 2 develop one part of the controlling idea? Use two details from the paragraph.

3 Why does the author explain the roof's protective layers, weight and plant care?

4 How does the final sentence provide a conclusion for the passage?

3 YOUR TURN Your own words

Compose a multi-paragraph informational essay explaining how rooftop gardens work and why their design matters. Use the supplied article. Introduce a clear controlling idea, develop at least two supporting explanations, use transitions, and conclude by connecting benefits with practical requirements.

Plan the explanation

State a controlling idea and group your supporting details into two body paragraphs.

Write the essay

Write an introduction, two developed body paragraphs and a conclusion, with paragraph breaks. Explain connections. Reread and improve a transition or supporting explanation.

This image shows a full page of blank, lined paper. It features approximately 20 evenly spaced horizontal grey lines across its entire width, providing a template for handwriting practice or general note-taking. The margins are consistent on all sides.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline the controlling idea in paragraph 1. Circle the first sentence of paragraphs 2 and 3, then number two details in each of those paragraphs that support the controlling idea. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What is the controlling idea of the passage?	Rooftop gardens can make crowded cities healthier by cooling buildings, managing rainwater, and creating places for people and wildlife.
2	How do the details in paragraph 2 develop one part of the controlling idea? Use two details from the paragraph.	The plants and growing material retain some rain. Water later evaporates, passes through plants, or drains more slowly. These details explain how a roof garden changes the route and timing of runoff.
3	Why does the author explain the roof's protective layers, weight and plant care?	These details explain how a roof garden must be designed and maintained. They prevent readers from treating it as simply putting soil on any roof.
4	How does the final sentence provide a conclusion for the passage?	It qualifies the claim by saying gardens are not a complete answer to every city problem, then restates their benefits as a practical use of space that can cool, protect, and enliven a neighborhood.

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Rooftop gardens combine living plants with a carefully designed roof system. They can cool buildings and manage rainfall, but those benefits depend on more than adding a patch of green above the street.

First, plants change what happens when sunlight reaches a roof. Their shade and release of water vapor can reduce surface heat. This may reduce a building's need for cooling. Vegetation also changes an unused surface into a living space that may support wildlife.

Rainwater provides another connection between living plants and building design. Growing material holds some rainfall instead of sending it immediately toward drains. Water then follows several paths, including evaporation and drainage. Protective layers, a suitable structure and ongoing plant care help the system work as intended.

A rooftop garden therefore serves several purposes at once. Its cooling and water-management functions are connected to practical decisions about construction and maintenance. Understanding both sides gives readers a clearer picture than describing a green roof only as an attractive garden.

Assess the actual essay, not just its plan. Require a clear controlling idea, multiple developed paragraphs, accurate supporting explanations, transitions and a connected conclusion. Other effective paragraph organizations are acceptable if the student completes the requested introduction, two body paragraphs and conclusion. No fixed word count is required. The sample is one possible informational essay, not a proposal supported by invented research. Background: U.S. EPA, Using Green Roofs to Reduce Heat Islands, <https://www.epa.gov/heatislands/using-green-roofs-reduce-heat-islands>; supplied passage is a paraphrase, not an EPA quotation.