Clear Steps

Study how clear choices connect a three-paragraph model.

6.W.3 "Usage and Mechanics Revise writing for clarity of content, word choice, sentence variety, and transition among paragraphs. Self- and peer-edit for capitalization, spelling, punctuation, sentence structure, paragraphing…"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each transition word or phrase. Then circle the first word of every sentence to notice how the writer varies sentence beginnings and connects the project steps clearly.

A Garden That Catches Rain

1 Last spring, students at Oak Ridge Middle School noticed puddles forming beside the parking lot after storms. The water rushed across the pavement, carrying soil and bits of trash toward a storm drain. Their science teacher proposed a rain garden, a shallow planted area that collects runoff. Unlike a regular flower bed, a rain garden is placed where water can soak slowly into the ground. The class chose a sunny strip near the drain and asked the principal for permission.

2 First, the students measured the space and drew a plan with curved edges. Next, they removed compacted soil, which does not absorb water well. A local nursery donated native plants, including switchgrass, coneflowers, and blue flag iris. These plants have roots that help hold soil in place. During two Saturday workdays, families added compost and planted the garden. By June, mulch covered the bare soil, and a small sign explained how the garden protects the nearby stream.

3 Afterward, the class watched the garden during several storms. Instead of racing over pavement, much of the rainwater pooled in the planted area and disappeared within a day. Students recorded the depth of the water and photographed insects visiting the flowers. The project did not stop every puddle, but it reduced runoff in that section of the campus. Because the garden needs care, a new group of students will pull weeds, replace mulch, and check the sign each season.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. List the four transition words or phrases in paragraph 2 that show the order of the work.

2. What punctuation mark follows “Next” in paragraph 2? Explain why the writer used it.

3. Why is the word “compacted” clearer than using only the word “soil” in paragraph 2?

4. How does “Afterward” at the start of paragraph 3 help the passage flow?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write three paragraphs, with two sentences in each paragraph, about a small improvement your class could make at school. Use at least two transition words or phrases, vary your sentence beginnings, and check your capitalization and punctuation.

Clear Steps

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline each transition word or phrase. Then circle the first word of every sentence to notice how the writer varies sentence beginnings and connects the project steps clearly. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	List the four transition words or phrases in paragraph 2 that show the order of the work.	**First; Next; During two Saturday workdays; By June.**
2	What punctuation mark follows “Next” in paragraph 2? Explain why the writer used it.	**A comma. It separates the introductory transition word from the main sentence.**
3	Why is the word “compacted” clearer than using only the word “soil” in paragraph 2?	**It identifies soil that does not absorb water well, which explains why the students removed it.**
4	How does “Afterward” at the start of paragraph 3 help the passage flow?	**It signals that observing the garden happened after the students built and planted it in paragraph 2.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Last month, our class noticed that the library's reading corner had only two worn cushions. Many students chose to sit on the floor during independent reading.

First, we surveyed classmates about colors, seating, and book storage. Then we asked the librarian to help us choose washable cushions and a low basket for magazines.

Afterward, families donated three cushions and several bookends. Now the reading corner is more comfortable, and students can find short magazines without searching through a messy shelf.

Accept equivalent explanations that accurately connect transition words, punctuation, word choice, and paragraph order to clarity. For the writing task, look for three two-sentence paragraphs, logical transitions, varied sentence openings, and correct Standard English conventions.