Details That Matter

Notice how an explanation serves its audience.

11-12.W.2.b "Elaborate on the topic thoroughly by selecting the most relevant facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Read the passage, then underline the definition of a rain garden, circle two details that help students picture how it works, and number two details a school would need when planning one.

A Place for the Rain

1 After a hard rain, water from a school roof can rush across pavement toward a storm drain. A rain garden offers another route. It is a shallow planted area designed to collect runoff and let it soak into the ground. Unlike an ordinary flower bed, its basin sits below the surrounding surface, where it can briefly hold water. For students who cross the courtyard, that lowered shape matters: water that might spread over a walkway has a place to gather. The garden is not a pond. Between storms, its surface is usually dry.

2 Imagine a downspout aimed toward a rain garden beside the cafeteria. Rain travels off the roof, along a shallow channel, and into the planted basin. Soil and roots slow the flow while some water soaks downward; plants also use some of the water. These details explain why the garden belongs near the runoff it is meant to catch, rather than in any available patch of grass. A path around the basin gives students a place to walk without packing down its soil. Packed soil would make it harder for water to enter.

3 A rain garden cannot absorb every storm. If rain falls faster than the soil can take it in, an overflow route should guide extra water to a suitable drain instead of a school doorway. The garden also needs care: leaves and litter can block its inlet, and plants may need attention while their roots become established. These limits do not cancel its purpose. They help a school judge where to build one and what upkeep to plan. For a student wondering whether the courtyard will stay usable, those practical details matter more than a list of decorative plant colors.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does the passage's definition help a reader distinguish a rain garden from an ordinary flower bed?

2. Choose two details that help students understand whether they could still cross the courtyard after rain. Explain why each detail is relevant.

3. Why are the downspout and shallow channel more useful details for someone choosing a location than the garden's decorative plant colors?

4. Which two details about limits or upkeep would help a school plan a rain garden? Explain what each detail helps the school decide.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Explain a school routine or tool you know to an incoming student in 90 to 110 words. Include a clear definition and two concrete details, and explain why each detail matters to that student.

ANSWER KEY

Details That Matter

HIGH SCHOOL · 11-12.W.2.b

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Read the passage, then underline the definition of a rain garden, circle two details that help students picture how it works, and number two details a school would need when planning one. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does the passage's definition help a reader distinguish a rain garden from an ordinary flower bed?	**It defines the garden as a shallow planted area that collects runoff and lets it soak in, then explains that its basin sits below the surrounding surface.**
2	Choose two details that help students understand whether they could still cross the courtyard after rain. Explain why each detail is relevant.	**The lowered basin gives runoff a place to gather instead of spreading across a walkway. A path around the basin lets students cross without packing down the soil.**
3	Why are the downspout and shallow channel more useful details for someone choosing a location than the garden's decorative plant colors?	**They show where roof runoff comes from and how it reaches the basin, so a school can place the garden where it will catch water.**
4	Which two details about limits or upkeep would help a school plan a rain garden? Explain what each detail helps the school decide.	**An overflow route helps the school plan where excess water will go during heavy rain. An inlet that can be blocked by leaves or litter helps the school plan regular clearing.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

A class assignment checklist is a short list of tasks that must be finished before you turn in your work. In our science class, the checklist is posted beside each lab report prompt, so you can compare your draft with the requirements before submitting it. One item asks for units beside every measurement; without units, a reader cannot tell whether a number describes centimeters or seconds. Another asks you to label the source of your data, which helps a partner trace your conclusion back to the observations. Check the list while revising, not just after you press submit, because some missing details take time to fix.

Accept other passage details when students explain their relevance to the audience or planning decision. For the open task, look for an accurate definition and two specific details whose value to an incoming student is explained.