Where Rain Goes

Use evidence to weigh the benefits and limits of rain gardens.

6-8.WHST.9 "Draw relevant evidence from informational texts and/or literary fiction or nonfiction texts to support written analysis, reflection, and research."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two details that show how rain gardens manage runoff, and circle two details that show their limits. Use your marks to choose evidence for your answers.

A Garden Built for Rain

1 After a heavy rain, water rushes across a school parking lot and carries bits of dirt and oil toward a storm drain. In many cities, drains send this runoff into nearby streams without treating it first. A rain garden offers another path. It is a shallow planted area set lower than the pavement around it. Water flows into the garden, collects for a short time, and slowly sinks into the soil. Unlike an ordinary flower bed, a rain garden is designed to catch water from a nearby hard surface.

2 As runoff moves through a rain garden, soil traps some sediment, and plants take up some of the water. Soil microbes can break down certain pollutants, but a rain garden does not remove every harmful substance. Deep roots help keep the soil open so water can soak in. Plants that tolerate both wet and dry conditions are useful because the garden may hold water after a storm but become dry between rains. The garden also provides food and shelter for insects, though its main job is to manage runoff.

3 Where the garden sits matters. It needs a place where runoff can reach it, yet it should not be put where water could damage a building's foundation. If the soil drains poorly, builders may need to add a special soil mix or an underground drain. Workers must also remove trash and replace dead plants so the garden keeps working. During an especially large storm, water may overflow and still reach a storm drain. A rain garden reduces some runoff; it cannot make every flood or pollution problem disappear.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why might a rain garden beside pavement reduce the amount of water entering a storm drain? Use two details from the passage to explain.

2. A class wants to choose plants with deep roots for a rain garden. What evidence supports that choice, and why does it matter?

3. Use one detail that shows how a rain garden can improve water quality and one that shows why it cannot fully clean runoff.

4. Would a rain garden guarantee that no water reaches a storm drain during a very large storm? Support your answer with evidence.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Your school can build a rain garden beside a paved basketball court, where runoff flows away from buildings, or next to a school wall, where runoff gathers near the foundation. In 4 to 5 sentences, recommend one site, use two specific details from the passage to explain your choice, and name one care need or limit.

ANSWER KEY

Where Rain Goes

GRADES 6-8 · 6-8.WHST.9

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two details that show how rain gardens manage runoff, and circle two details that show their limits. Use your marks to choose evidence for your answers. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why might a rain garden beside pavement reduce the amount of water entering a storm drain? Use two details from the passage to explain.	**It catches runoff from a nearby hard surface, and the collected water slowly sinks into the soil instead of all flowing to the drain.**
2	A class wants to choose plants with deep roots for a rain garden. What evidence supports that choice, and why does it matter?	**Deep roots help keep the soil open, which lets water soak in.**
3	Use one detail that shows how a rain garden can improve water quality and one that shows why it cannot fully clean runoff.	**Soil traps some sediment or microbes break down certain pollutants, but the passage says a rain garden does not remove every harmful substance.**
4	Would a rain garden guarantee that no water reaches a storm drain during a very large storm? Support your answer with evidence.	**No. During an especially large storm, water may overflow the garden and still reach a storm drain.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I recommend building the rain garden beside the paved basketball court, not next to the school wall. The passage says water can flow into a shallow planted area from a nearby hard surface, so the court could supply runoff. It also warns that water near a building's foundation can cause damage, which makes the wall a risky site. Workers would need to remove trash and replace dead plants. Even with that care, water might overflow during a very large storm.

Accept accurate paraphrases and different relevant evidence from the passage. For the recommendation, look for two specific details connected to the chosen site and one accurate care need or limit.