A Steady Voice

Notice how sentence variety supports a clear, consistent tone.

6.L.3.a "Maintain appropriate consistency in style and tone while varying sentence patterns for meaning and audience interest."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one short sentence in each paragraph, and circle the opening words of one longer sentence in each paragraph. Notice how the sentence patterns change while the tone stays calm and informative.

A Place for Rain

1. After a hard rain, water gathers beside the school walkway. It used to spread across the path, leaving wet shoes and muddy tracks inside. Now a shallow rain garden sits a few steps away. What happens when the next storm arrives? Water runs off the path and into the garden, where loose soil lets some of it soak into the ground. The garden does not make every puddle vanish. It gives some of the rain a place to slow down instead of rushing toward a drain.

2. Look closely at the plants after a shower. Their leaves catch drops, while their roots help hold the soil in place. Beneath the surface, water moves through spaces between bits of soil and rock. Slowly, some of it sinks deeper. A rain garden works best when its plants can handle both soggy days and dry ones, so gardeners choose species suited to local conditions. Mulch on top can help keep soil from washing away. Even with these features, the garden may fill during a very large storm.

3. On a clear day, the rain garden still has a job. Flowers may offer food to bees, and stems can give small insects places to rest. Students walking by can see which plants are growing and whether water has left behind any trash. If wrappers collect near the edge, the class can pick them up before the next storm. No single garden can stop a flood. Yet this small patch shows how a school can make room for rain and care for a shared space at the same time.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. In paragraph 1, how does the question “What happens when the next storm arrives?” prepare you for the sentence that follows?

2. Compare “Slowly, some of it sinks deeper.” with the longer sentence beginning “A rain garden works best.” What does each sentence pattern help you understand?

3. In paragraph 2, compare the openings “Beneath the surface” and “Even with these features.” How does each guide you to a different part of the explanation?

4. Why does the short sentence “No single garden can stop a flood.” work well before the longer final sentence? How do both support the passage’s tone?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Choose a school routine that could be improved, and write a five- or six-sentence paragraph explaining a practical change in a calm, informative tone. Include one question, one sentence of five words or fewer, and one sentence of at least 15 words.

ANSWER KEY

A Steady Voice

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one short sentence in each paragraph, and circle the opening words of one longer sentence in each paragraph. Notice how the sentence patterns change while the tone stays calm and informative. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	In paragraph 1, how does the question "What happens when the next storm arrives?" prepare you for the sentence that follows?	**It raises a question about the rain, and the next sentence explains where the water goes.**
2	Compare "Slowly, some of it sinks deeper." with the longer sentence beginning "A rain garden works best." What does each sentence pattern help you understand?	**The short sentence draws attention to water sinking. The longer sentence connects the plants' need to handle wet and dry days with gardeners' choices.**
3	In paragraph 2, compare the openings "Beneath the surface" and "Even with these features." How does each guide you to a different part of the explanation?	**"Beneath the surface" shifts attention underground. "Even with these features" introduces a limit to what the garden can handle.**
4	Why does the short sentence "No single garden can stop a flood." work well before the longer final sentence? How do both support the passage's tone?	**The short sentence states a limit plainly. The longer sentence explains the garden's smaller benefits, keeping the ending realistic and informative.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Sometimes students lose time searching for pencils before class begins. What could make supplies easier to find? A labeled tray could hold sharpened pencils near the door, where everyone can reach them without interrupting a lesson. Students could return borrowed pencils to a second tray at the end of class. The system is simple. Once a week, a helper could move returned pencils into the first tray and check whether any need sharpening.

Accept different marked sentences and openings when students can explain how they support the passage's calm, informative tone. For Your Turn, check that the paragraph presents a practical change and meets all three sentence-pattern requirements.