Words That Work

Use context clues to understand and apply precise vocabulary.

8.L.6 "Acquire and use grade-appropriate academic and domain-specific vocabulary; gather and apply knowledge of words and phrases to reading, writing, speaking, and listening."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Circle the first use of runoff, permeable, mitigate, and filter. Underline a nearby clue that helps you understand each word.

A Garden for the Rain

1 After a summer storm, the basketball court at Harbor School stayed slick for hours. Rain could not sink through the asphalt, so water flowed toward the street drain. This moving water, called runoff, carried grit and bits of litter with it. A student group proposed replacing a narrow strip of pavement with a rain garden. Its soil and deep-rooted plants would absorb some of the rain before it reached the drain. The garden would not stop every puddle, but it could reduce the volume of runoff.

2 Before planting, the group tested the ground with a bucket of water. The compacted soil beneath the court barely let water pass. To make the garden more permeable, they planned to loosen the soil and mix in compost. Water could then seep through more easily. They also chose native grasses, plants that already grow in the region and can handle local weather. These grasses would need less extra watering once established. The students recorded their choices in a proposal, a written plan for the school board.

3 At the board meeting, one student said the garden would mitigate flooding near the drain. She chose mitigate instead of eliminate because even a healthy garden has limits during heavy storms. Another student explained that the plants could filter some pollutants from runoff as water passed through soil, though the garden could not make dirty water safe to drink. The board approved a small trial plot. Each month, the group would observe how long puddles lasted and revise its plan if the results did not match its predictions.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What does runoff mean in this passage? Give one clue from the first paragraph.

2. What would make the garden soil more permeable? Use a detail from the passage to explain what permeable means.

3. Why is mitigate a more precise word than eliminate for what the garden could do about flooding?

4. What does filter mean here? Why would filtering runoff not make the water safe to drink?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Your school wants to keep its bike racks usable during heavy rain. Write three or four sentences proposing a change. Use at least two of these words accurately: runoff, permeable, mitigate, filter. Include a clue that helps a reader understand each word you choose.

ANSWER KEY

Words That Work

GRADE 8 · 8.L.6

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Circle the first use of runoff, permeable, mitigate, and filter. Underline a nearby clue that helps you understand each word. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What does runoff mean in this passage? Give one clue from the first paragraph.	**Runoff is water that flows over a surface. The passage says rain could not sink through the asphalt and flowed toward the drain.**
2	What would make the garden soil more permeable? Use a detail from the passage to explain what permeable means.	**Loosening the soil and mixing in compost would make it more permeable, meaning water could pass through it more easily.**
3	Why is mitigate a more precise word than eliminate for what the garden could do about flooding?	**Mitigate means reduce the flooding, not end it. The passage says the garden would have limits during heavy storms.**
4	What does filter mean here? Why would filtering runoff not make the water safe to drink?	**Filter means remove some pollutants as water passes through soil. Removing some pollutants does not remove everything that could make the water unsafe.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Our school could replace the pavement beside the bike racks with permeable pavers that let rain soak into the ground. This change could mitigate puddles, making them smaller after a storm rather than stopping them completely. Students could check the area after rain to see whether the change works.

Accept equivalent meanings supported by passage clues. For Part 3, check that the proposed change fits the bike-rack setting and that context makes at least two vocabulary words clear.