When Greenery Works

Trace how an informational text qualifies a claim.

9-10.RI.5 "Analyze in detail how an author's ideas or claims are developed and refined by particular text structures (e.g. sentences, paragraphs, or larger portions of a text)."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the sentence in each paragraph that states or refines the main claim. Circle the words that signal a change in the claim from one paragraph to the next.

Can a Garden Handle a Storm?

1 After a summer storm, water rushes along a city curb, carrying grit toward a drain. On some streets, a planted depression interrupts that path. Called a rain garden, it holds runoff briefly while water filters into the soil. Its roots and soil can trap some sediment before the water reaches pipes or streams. This small scene suggests a tempting claim: replacing patches of pavement with rain gardens can help cities manage stormwater. The claim seems especially convincing where hard surfaces keep rain from soaking into the ground.

2 But a rain garden is not a drain that works equally well everywhere. If the ground beneath it drains slowly, water may remain on the surface longer than planners expect. During a heavy storm, runoff can also arrive faster than a small garden can absorb it. Overflow needs a safe route; otherwise, water might pool near a building or spill across a walkway. These limits do not erase the benefit described above. They narrow the claim: a rain garden can reduce runoff when its location, soil, and capacity fit the site.

3 That narrower claim changes what a city should do next. Before planting, a design team can test how quickly the soil absorbs water and estimate how much runoff will arrive from nearby roofs or pavement. If the expected flow exceeds the garden's capacity, the team can enlarge the planted area or provide an overflow outlet to a suitable drainage system. After construction, crews must clear litter and replace plants when needed so the garden keeps working. The real proposal, then, is not simply to add greenery. It is to match each rain garden to its site and maintain it over time.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does the opening scene in paragraph 1 prepare readers for the claim about rain gardens?

2. What change does the opening of paragraph 2 signal? Explain how two details in that paragraph narrow the earlier claim.

3. How does paragraph 3 turn the limits in paragraph 2 into a more precise proposal?

4. What does the sentence “These limits do not erase the benefit described above” do between the evidence in paragraph 2 and the recommendations in paragraph 3?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine moving paragraph 3 before paragraph 2. In one paragraph, explain how that change would affect the development of the main claim. Refer to at least two specific details and judge which order is more effective.

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PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the sentence in each paragraph that states or refines the main claim. Circle the words that signal a change in the claim from one paragraph to the next. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does the opening scene in paragraph 1 prepare readers for the claim about rain gardens?	**The scene shows runoff moving toward a drain and a planted area interrupting its path. Those concrete details make the claim that rain gardens can help manage stormwater seem plausible.**
2	What change does the opening of paragraph 2 signal? Explain how two details in that paragraph narrow the earlier claim.	**The opening signals a challenge to the broad claim. Slow-draining soil can leave water on the surface, and a heavy storm can overwhelm a small garden, so the benefit depends on site conditions and capacity.**
3	How does paragraph 3 turn the limits in paragraph 2 into a more precise proposal?	**It recommends testing soil, estimating runoff, providing enough capacity or a safe overflow route, and maintaining the garden. The proposal becomes matching each garden to its site rather than simply adding greenery.**
4	What does the sentence "These limits do not erase the benefit described above" do between the evidence in paragraph 2 and the recommendations in paragraph 3?	**It keeps the initial benefit in view while acknowledging limits. This prepares readers for paragraph 3's recommendations, which address those limits instead of abandoning rain gardens.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Moving paragraph 3 before paragraph 2 would make its opening, "That narrower claim," confusing because readers would not yet know what had narrowed. Soil tests and an overflow outlet would appear before the passage explains slow drainage and heavy-storm overflow. In the original order, those limits create problems that the design steps answer. The original sequence more effectively turns a broad claim about rain gardens into a practical, qualified proposal.

Accept responses that accurately connect specific structural choices to changes in the claim. For the open task, students may favor either order if they explain how the placement of the limits and recommendations affects readers' understanding.