Compost With Purpose

Read a model informational essay for its controlling idea, support, and craft.

6.11.B "compose informational texts, including multi-paragraph essays that convey information about a topic, using a clear controlling idea or thesis statement and genre characteristics and craft;"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the controlling idea, circle transition words or phrases, and number two details that support the controlling idea. These marks show how the writer keeps the informational essay focused and organized.

A School Compost Program

(1) Food scraps from the cafeteria can become useful compost instead of trash. A school compost program reduces waste, creates soil for campus gardens, and teaches students how materials cycle through nature. Composting begins when fruit peels, vegetable scraps, coffee grounds, and dry leaves are collected in a bin. Meat, dairy products, and oily foods are left out because they can attract pests. With air, moisture, and time, tiny organisms break down the mixture into dark, crumbly material that helps plants grow.

(2) First, composting can shrink the amount of waste sent away from school. When students sort lunch scraps into a labeled container, fewer useful materials enter a landfill. This change also gives the school garden a local source of nutrients. Finished compost can be mixed into garden beds, where it helps soil hold water and provides nutrients for plants. For example, gardeners can add compost before planting beans or flowers. These practical results show why careful sorting matters each day.

(3) A compost program succeeds when students and adults share simple routines. Science classes can explain what belongs in the bin, while cafeteria signs can help students sort quickly. Garden clubs can use the finished compost and report what they notice in the soil. In this way, one program connects waste reduction, gardening, and learning. Starting with clear rules and a small collection bin would allow a school to test the idea before expanding it. Composting is a practical project with benefits students can see.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What is the controlling idea of the essay?

2. Which two details in paragraph 2 explain how finished compost helps a garden?

3. What transition word begins paragraph 2? How does it help organize the essay?

4. How does paragraph 3 work as a conclusion? Give two ways it wraps up the essay.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 6-sentence informational paragraph about one improvement your school could make. State a clear controlling idea in the first sentence, include at least two supporting details, use a transition word or phrase, and end with a concluding sentence.

ANSWER KEY

Compost With Purpose

GRADE 6 · TEKS 6.11.B

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the controlling idea, circle transition words or phrases, and number two details that support the controlling idea. These marks show how the writer keeps the informational essay focused and organized. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What is the controlling idea of the essay?	**A school compost program reduces waste, creates soil for campus gardens, and teaches students how materials cycle through nature.**
2	Which two details in paragraph 2 explain how finished compost helps a garden?	**Finished compost helps soil hold water and provides nutrients for plants.**
3	What transition word begins paragraph 2? How does it help organize the essay?	**First. It signals that the paragraph gives the first reason or benefit supporting the controlling idea.**
4	How does paragraph 3 work as a conclusion? Give two ways it wraps up the essay.	**It connects composting to waste reduction, gardening, and learning, and it suggests starting small before expanding. Its final sentence restates that composting has practical benefits.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Adding a water refill station near the gym would improve hydration and reduce waste at school. The station would give students a place to refill reusable bottles during busy activities. As a result, students could carry water without buying a new drink container. Reusable bottles can also reduce the number of single-use bottles thrown away. Clear signs could show students where the station is and remind them to bring bottles. This improvement would support hydration and reduce waste at school.

Accept controlling ideas that state a focused topic and main point. For the paragraph, check for six sentences, a clear first-sentence controlling idea, two relevant details, a transition, and a concluding sentence.