

Soil Savers

Read how people can protect a useful natural resource.

3.8.d "soil is a natural resource and should be conserved."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each action that helps conserve soil, and circle the words that tell how the action protects it.

Saving Garden Soil

- ① Soil is more than dirt under our shoes. It is a natural resource made from tiny rock pieces, air, water, and remains of living things. Plants use soil to hold their roots and get water and nutrients. Many foods, such as beans, carrots, and apples, begin with plants growing in healthy soil. Soil also provides homes for worms and other small living things.
- ② Soil can be lost when wind or moving water carries it away. This loss is called erosion. Bare ground is easier for rain to wash away, especially on a slope. Farmers and gardeners can protect soil by keeping plants or mulch on the ground. Roots help hold soil in place, and mulch softens the force of raindrops. These choices help save soil for future growing.
- ③ At Pine Street School, students noticed muddy water leaving their garden after storms. They covered empty spaces with leaves and planted low flowers along the edge. The leaves acted as mulch, and the flower roots held the ground together. The students did not dump trash or chemicals on the garden soil. By caring for the soil now, they helped keep it useful for plants, animals, and people later.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 Why is soil an important natural resource? Give two reasons from the passage.

2 What can happen to soil when wind or moving water carries it away?

3 How do plant roots and mulch help conserve soil?

4 What two actions did the Pine Street students take to protect their garden soil?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Think of a bare patch of soil near a school, home, or garden. Write two sentences that name two actions people could take to conserve the soil and explain how each action would help.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline each action that helps conserve soil, and circle the words that tell how the action protects it. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why is soil an important natural resource? Give two reasons from the passage.	Soil helps plants grow, including plants that provide food. It also provides homes for worms and other small living things.
2	What can happen to soil when wind or moving water carries it away?	The soil can be lost through erosion.
3	How do plant roots and mulch help conserve soil?	Roots hold soil in place. Mulch softens the force of raindrops so rain is less likely to wash soil away.
4	What two actions did the Pine Street students take to protect their garden soil?	They covered empty spaces with leaves and planted low flowers along the edge.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I would plant grass on the bare patch because its roots would hold the soil in place. I would spread mulch over open ground because it would reduce the force of raindrops.

Accept answers that identify soil as useful for plant growth, food, or habitats and explain that it should be protected from loss or pollution. For the open response, accept two realistic conservation actions with an accurate explanation of how each protects soil.