

## Skill: Identify/Analyze/Infer Cause-Effect Relations

Letter to the Mayor    **3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Nonfiction**    Center for Urban Education ©2009

In 2009, more than 2 thousand children sent letters to the mayor of Chicago. Their teachers asked them to write. They said that the mayor wanted to know what the children thought. He wanted to learn their ideas about Chicago.

The children wrote many different letters. Some wrote about trash. They wanted people to stop littering. Some wrote about gangs. They wanted people to stop the gangs. Some wrote about streets. They wanted to have safer streets. Some wanted to have more parks. Some wanted more playgrounds. And some wanted to have computers for every student. There were many different ideas.

The mayor read some of the letters. He asked some of the children to come to see him. They went downtown. They went to his office. His office is in a place called City Hall.

They read their letters out loud. The mayor listened. Then he said that the letters were good. They would help him make plans for the city.

When the children left, they were proud. They went back to their schools. They told other children about the mayor. They told their teachers he liked the letters. They thanked their teachers for asking them to write the letters.

The newspaper had an article about this event. The same day the children visited, people read about the visit to the mayor. The newspaper printed some of the letters. Parents were proud. So were the children.

*Directions: Choose the best answer for each question*

1. Why did the children write the letters?

- a. They wanted to.
- b. They liked the mayor.
- c. Their teachers assigned it.
- d. Their school did it.

2. What happened because the children sent the letters?

- a. The mayor asked them to meet with him.
- b. The city got cleaner.
- c. The neighborhoods were safer.
- d. The teachers did a good job.

3. What happened because the children read their letters to the mayor?

- a. The children got good grades.
- b. The mayor learned their ideas.
- c. The schools got playgrounds.
- d. The children visited the mayor.

4. What could happen because the letters were in the newspaper?

- a. People would stop littering.
- b. There would be more parks.
- c. Many people would learn about the children's ideas.
- d. The children would get computers.

5. *Write your own answer to this question.*

What do you think will happen because the mayor read the letters?

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**TEACHER NOTES: Develop Students' Skills: Exercise Thinking**

These questions have not been validated, so decisions about student's achievement should not be made based on their responses. They are intended to exercise skills. Recommended activities include: students work in pairs to choose the best response; give students the questions without the responses so they generate their own answers; students make up additional questions; students make up questions like these for another passage.

**Answers:** *You can remove this answer key and then give it to students and ask them to figure out the basis for the correct response.*

Item	1	2	3	4
Answer	c	a	b	c

Question 5 is open-ended. Here is a suggested response.

5. The mayor will make changes.

## Skill: Identify/Analyze/Infer Cause-Effect Relations

More Trees

3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Fiction

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When my teacher asked me to write to the mayor, I thought about it. I thought about the changes I want. I want a new playground. We used to have a playground, but our community got crowded. They built homes where the playground was. I want a new library, too. We had a library, but it burned down. People said they needed too much money to build a new one.

My teacher said to write about just one thing I wanted. So I thought about everything. Then I chose one thing. I chose trees. I want more trees in our community. If we have more trees, the community will be cooler in summer. It will be prettier, too. And in winter we can put lights on them. That will be so pretty. I am sure this is a change everyone would like.

I wrote my ideas to the mayor. I told my family about it, too. My mother told the block club the idea. They liked it. They called a city office. They asked if they could get trees to plant on our block. It took weeks to get the answer, but then the answer came. We got ten trees.

One Saturday, the people in the block club planted them. They had to dig big holes, and that was hard work. Then they had to water them every day for a month. People took good care of the trees.

They were little trees, but they started to grow. Birds came to nest in them. Now in the morning I hear birds singing. I knew the trees would be pretty, but I didn't know there would be more birds.

I'm glad I wrote the letter, and I'm glad I told my mother my idea. I hope the mayor puts trees all over the city. We already have them on my block, and everyone here is glad we do.

*Directions: Choose the best answer for each question*

6. Why didn't the community have a library?

- a. They did not want one.
- b. It closed.
- c. There was a fire.
- d. They did not need it.

7. Why did they close the playground?

- a. They needed more homes.
- b. People wanted to make a park there.
- c. No one played there.
- d. They had another playground.

8. Why did the Block Club get trees?

- a. They liked them.
- b. They planted them.
- c. They took care of them.
- d. They asked the city office for them.

9. Why did more birds come to the neighborhood?

- a. They could sing there.
- b. They could eat the trees.
- c. They could nest in the trees.
- d. They could get water there.

10. *Write your own answer to this question.*

What changed because they planted the trees?

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**Answers:** *You can remove this answer key and then give it to students and ask them to figure out the basis for the correct response.*

Item	6	7	8	9
Answer	c	a	a	c

Question 10 is open-ended. Here is a suggested response.

10. The neighborhood got better.