

1 My school appeared on the news last week because we had made an important change in our community. Our 7th grade class had planted a large garden in what was once only a vacant lot. It was a lot of work, it took much cooperation and many weeks, but it was all worth it. I got blisters from digging, and we all got insect bites, too.

2 I learned a lot about gardening and collaboration, and then I learned about the media. This experience taught me a great deal about television news. First, our teacher telephoned the TV station and informed them of what we had accomplished. She spoke with the producer—the person who assigns reporters to cover interesting stories.

3 I never knew how people get on the news, I didn't know you could call and tell the TV station about your school. The producer checked with the directors, but they claimed there were plenty of stories similar to ours. They wanted to know what was special about our particular garden, since many schools plant them.

4 The teacher explained that, after going on the Internet to learn about the prairie, we had made a prairie garden. We had gone to a prairie and gotten seeds from the plants, and then we planted them. We did not water the garden, but we did weed it. We decided to let nature water it with rain, since that was how prairies grew in the past. We sent a picture of the garden to the news station. In the picture, the grass was so high that it stood taller than the fourth grade students.

5 The director thought our story would be interesting because it was not just a garden, but a history lesson. Actually, it was also a science lesson. As a result, they sent a reporter to our school, and that reporter also brought a cameraman. The security guard helped them carry the equipment into the building.

6 They interviewed the principal and asked detailed questions about the garden—whose idea was it, what did it cost, how big was it, and how big did we plan it would be—would we be expanding it? After that, they interviewed us, and we explained to them what we had learned through this project. They even interviewed a person on the street and asked what he thought about our garden.

7 They were at our school for two hours, and it was exciting, so we were really ecstatic. That night, we watched the news, and there we were. The news anchor told our story. It was only two minutes long, but it was us. We were famous. All that work, all those blisters, it was worth it, we knew that when we saw the garden every day, but now we knew that the whole city thought so, too.

Summarize Fiction

Questions developed by Center for Urban Education for use by Chicago Public Schools 2010.

Choose the best answer for each question.

1. What do you include in a summary of a fiction passage?

- a. All the events.
- b. The important events.
- c. What you think is interesting.
- d. Why you liked it.

3. Which of these persons should be included in the summary?

- a. the teacher
- b. the cameraman
- c. the 4th grade students
- d. the security guard

2. What is the best summary of paragraph 4?

- a. It rained a lot.
- b. They planted a natural garden.
- c. Prairie grass grows very tall.
- d. Weeds are a kind of plant.

4. What is the best summary of paragraph 7?

- a. They were recognized for their project.
- b. They had worked very hard.
- c. People in the neighborhood knew about their work.
- d. Their project had ended.

5. *Write your own answer to this question. Write a short summary of the passage.*

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	b	b	a	a

Question 5 is open-ended. Here is a suggested response.
Summaries should include the main events and the purpose of the project.