

Identify/Analyze/Infer Cause-Effect Relations

8th Grade Nonfiction: A Garden in Lawndale

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A catalyst is a spark. It is the start of a change. As you read this report, think what the spark was.

Eighth grade students at a school in Lawndale saw progress as builders constructed new homes where vacant lots had been. Families were moving into the community, although there still were some vacant lots. In those vacant lots, there was a lot of trash. Members of block clubs picked up the trash, but even then, the lots did not stay clean. Wind blew trash there from the street. “No one can do anything about this,” said one student. “Yes, we can,” said another. Their teacher agreed. They would plant a garden in a vacant lot.

Their teacher showed them pictures of the community long ago. She showed them that it used to have great gardens. The students said they could make this change. It was after Barack Obama had been elected. His slogan had been “Yes, we can.” They believed it, and they would prove it.

The students met with the principal to ask if they could create a community garden in the vacant lot closest to the school. She told them that it was a great idea, but they would have to volunteer their own time and work on it every weekend. The students agreed and promised they would donate their time every Saturday until it snowed. Even then, they would keep the sidewalk cleared near the lot.

The students needed to collaborate with the community. They wanted to be sure that everyone in the community wanted the garden. They met with block clubs and told them their plan. The block clubs applauded the project and said they would help.

The students went on the Internet to learn about plants. They looked for plants that would grow well in Chicago. They chose some evergreen plants and bulbs. They learned a lot about plants and gardening, and they also learned about fund-raising.

The students needed money to get the bulbs and plants. They needed tools, too. They made a budget and drew pictures of what the garden would look like when it was finished. They sent that budget and their plan to get funding, and a foundation funded their plan. The students got \$300 to buy what they needed.

They are 8th graders, so this spring they will meet with the seventh grade. They will ask them to take over the garden. It will be their legacy to the school community.

Directions: Choose the best answer for each question

1. What was the catalyst that started the plan?

- a. The teacher.
- b. The student.
- c. The block club.
- d. The principal.

2. What caused students to care about their community?

- a. They are committed citizens.
- b. They are 8th graders.
- c. They like their teacher.
- d. They live near the school.

3. Why did the students ask the Block Clubs to help?

- a. They live in the community.
- b. They like gardens.
- c. The principal told them to.
- d. They wanted to involve them.

4. What happened because the students did this project?

- a. They can graduate.
- b. They have changed their community.
- c. They have more friends.
- d. Their class got money.

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

What do you predict will be an effect of the project in the future?

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	a	a	d	b

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

5. The community will be a better place to live.