

A Garden in Lawndale

CCSSR1: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

CCSSR2: Determine **central ideas or themes** of a text and analyze their development; **summarize** the key supporting details and ideas.

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.

EXPLAIN WHAT YOU LEARNED

1. Underline the most important information in each paragraph.
2. Write a short summary that tells what the passage explains. Include only the most important information.

Start your summary this way:

The main idea of the passage is _____.
Here is information that helps you understand that idea.

Then finish the summary. Include the information that helps explain the main idea.