

Skill: Identify/Analyze/Infer Cause-Effect Relations

The Recycling Center

5th Grade Nonfiction

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Students at an elementary school in Chicago studied ecology. They learned that there was so much trash that it was a world-wide problem. They asked their teacher if they could do something to help solve the problem. “It is a very big problem,” she said, “but if every community helps, that would really make a difference.”

The students decided to set up a Saturday Recycling Center. They would collect trash. Then they would get it to a place. The students used the Internet to find out more about recycling in Chicago. They found that there are 15 “drop off” sites—places where people can bring trash to get it recycled.

The students had to figure out how to get the trash to the site. They went to talk with the minister of the church near their school. They knew that he drove a van and helped people. They went to ask him to help with their plan.

The minister agreed to help. He said he would pick up the recycling one Saturday each month after the students pack it. He said it was such a good plan they could use the churchyard for the Recycling Center. They decided it would be once a month, on Saturday afternoon. They chose the first Saturday of the month.

So everything was organized. All they needed was trash to recycle.

The students made posters to put in stores in the neighborhood. The minister announced the new recycling program at the church service and put up a poster, too. The community center put a note about the Recycling Center in their monthly newsletter. The students went into the other classrooms at their school and asked children to tell their families about the Saturday recycling.

The first Saturday was a great success. In fact, they got so much trash that the minister had to make two trips to take it all to the drop off site. The students still send reminders home, but now most people in the community know that if it's the first Saturday, it's time to recycle.

Directions: Choose the best answer for each question

1. Why did the minister make more than one trip to the drop off place?

- a. The weather was good.
- b. The people were busy.
- c. The truck could not carry it all.
- d. There were too many people.

2. Why did the school start the recycling center?

- a. The teacher wanted to.
- b. The students cared.
- c. The principal decided.
- d. Parents asked for it.

3. Why did the students do this work?

- a. They wanted to help the world.
- b. They wanted to stop litter.
- c. They wanted to volunteer.
- d. They wanted something to do on Saturdays.

4. Why did many people help?

- a. They had trash.
- b. They learned about it.
- c. They lived nearby.
- d. They liked the children.

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

An effect is what happens because of a choice or a change.

What do you think will be one effect of this change? What will one effect be of the recycling center?

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	b	a	b

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

5. The neighborhood will recycle more.

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A Better Community

5th Grade Fiction

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My daughter brought a note home. I looked at the note and smiled. “So we will have a recycling center,” I said. She started to explain why it is important to recycle. “I know,” I said, “but I don’t have time.”

She thought of a way to recycle. She set up a bag in the kitchen. She said it would be for plastic and that we should put plastic bottles and bags in there. Then once a month we would take the plastic to the recycling center. It is open once a month on the first Saturday.

She said that plastic takes us lots of energy to make and it is much better to recycle it instead of throwing it out. She explained that plastic lasts a long time so if you put it in landfill it just stays there. It is hard for the environment when people throw it out.

It seemed like a good idea. I was surprised that the bag got full in one week. We had filled it with empty plastic bottles.

My daughter said we should look at what we use. We are using too much plastic. We tried to find ways to use less plastic. Now when I go to the store, I take a cloth bag.

I told my neighbor about this. She liked the idea. She started keeping her plastic in a bag. We all went together to the Recycling Center on the first Saturday. We brought about ten bags of plastic.

When we got there, we saw many bags. People had brought lots of trash. They brought paper and metal, too. “Now that we have this center, it is easier to recycle,” said my neighbor.

When we were walking back from the Recycling Center, I saw a change. The street was cleaner. Most days I see trash in the street. People litter. But there was no litter today. My daughter said that another class had “adopted” the street. They were picking up litter there and taking it to the Recycling Center.

I said, “This is really big. It is about more than plastic. It is about lots of changes.”

Directions: Choose the best answer for each question

6. Why did the family save its plastic?

- a. because they liked plastic
- b. because they were going to recycle it
- c. because they had so much
- d. because they could get paid for it

7. Why is it good to recycle plastic?

- a. It helps the environment.
- b. You can get paid for it.
- c. People need plastic.
- d. It is better than glass.

8. A result is what happens because of an action. What is a result of starting the Recycling Center?

- a. It made people angry.
- b. It helped people help the environment.
- c. It made parents proud.
- d. It gave children a place to go.

9. What do you think the family will do next?

- a. stop recycling
- b. keep recycling
- c. move to another community
- d. use more plastic

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

Why is this story called "A Better Community"?

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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	b	a	b	b

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

10. The recycling made the community cleaner.