# The School Garden

**Grade 3 reading · main idea and details**

Name: Date: Score: / 11



## The School Garden

**1** Last spring the students at Hill Street School turned a strip of grass beside the parking lot into a garden. Two classes built the wooden beds. Another class filled them with soil. By the end of April there were tomatoes, lettuce, beans and marigolds growing where there had been nothing but weeds.

**2** The garden was not only for looking at. Every Tuesday one class took a turn weeding, watering and checking the plants. Students kept a notebook of what they found: which seeds came up first, which leaves the insects liked best, and how much taller the bean plants had grown that week.

**3** Some of the work was not fun at all. In June the watering had to be done every single morning, even on days when nobody wanted to be outside before the bell. Twice, rabbits got under the fence and ate a whole row of lettuce down to the stems.

**4** In September the school held a harvest lunch. The salad on every plate had come from the garden beside the parking lot. Mr. Tan, the principal, said it was the best lunch the school had ever served — and the students who had carried the watering cans in June agreed with him.

**The main idea is what the *whole* passage is about.** A detail is only one piece of it.

1. What is the main idea of the whole passage? Circle one letter.

   **a** Rabbits got under the fence and ate the lettuce.

   **b** Students at Hill Street School built a garden, looked after it all year, and ate what it grew.

   **c** Watering plants in June is hard work.

   **d** Marigolds grow well beside parking lots.

2. What is the main idea of paragraph 2? Write it in one sentence.

3. Write **two** details from the passage that support the main idea of the whole passage.

4. Paragraph 3 is mostly about … Circle one letter.

   **a** the harvest lunch

   **b** the hard parts of keeping the garden going

   **c** how to plant lettuce

   **d** what rabbits like to eat

5. Write a new title for this passage that tells the main idea.

6. The last sentence reminds us about the students who carried watering cans in June. Why does the writer end that way?

7. Is this passage mostly about one school’s garden, or about gardens in general? How do you know?

8. Where exactly was the garden built? *(paragraph 1)*

**Word work.** Find the word in the passage that matches each meaning.

1. a long, narrow piece of land *(paragraph 1)*

2. pulling out plants you do not want *(paragraph 2)*

3. the gathering in of crops when they are ready *(paragraph 4)*

# The School Garden — Answer Key

**Grade 3 reading · main idea and details**

1. Main idea of the whole passage: **b — Students at Hill Street School built a garden, looked after it all year, and ate what it grew.** The other three are true details from the passage, but each one covers only a small part of it.
2. Main idea of paragraph 2: **The students took turns caring for the garden and wrote down what they noticed.**
3. Two supporting details: **Answers vary.** Any two of: two classes built the beds; another class filled them with soil; one class weeded and watered every Tuesday; they kept a notebook; the watering was done every morning in June; the salad at the harvest lunch came from the garden.
4. Paragraph 3 is mostly about: **b — the hard parts of keeping the garden going**
5. A new title: **Answers vary.** Accept any title that names the garden *and* what the students did with it — “The Hill Street Garden,” “From Weeds to Salad,” “A Garden the Students Grew.” A title naming only the rabbits or only the lunch has picked a detail instead of the main idea.
6. Why remind us about June at the end? **It shows the hard work paid off. The students who did the worst job — watering before the bell every morning — are the ones eating the salad at the end.**
7. One school or gardens in general? **One school.** The passage names Hill Street School, Mr. Tan, and one particular strip of grass beside one parking lot.
8. Where the garden was built: **on a strip of grass beside the school parking lot, where there had been nothing but weeds.**

## Word work

1. a long, narrow piece of land — **strip**
2. pulling out plants you do not want — **weeding**
3. the gathering in of crops when they are ready — **harvest**

> The three wrong answers in question 1 are all true. That is the point of the question. A student who picks “rabbits ate the lettuce” has not misread the passage — they have picked a detail and called it the main idea, which is the single most common error at this level. Ask them whether the whole passage is about rabbits, and they will usually correct themselves.