

*ZB* **Zaner-Bloser**  
**NEXT GENERATION ASSESSMENT PRACTICE**  
English Language Arts / Literacy

**Student Edition**

**Grade 2**  
Informative/Explanatory

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**PART I: Close Reading****Your Task**

You will view two sources about making positive changes to what's around you. Then you will answer two questions about what you have learned. Later, in Part 2, you will write an essay comparing and contrasting the ways the characters in the sources improve their environment.

**Steps to Follow**

In order to plan and write your essay, you will do all of the following:

1. View two sources.
2. Make notes about the information from the sources.
3. Answer two questions about the sources.

**Directions for Beginning**

You will have 55 minutes to complete Part I. You will now view two sources. Take notes because you may want to refer to your notes while writing your essay. You can review any of the sources as often as you like. Answer the questions in the spaces provided after them.

From  
*Tire Mountain*

“Miss Mattie, my mama wants to move,” I say.

Miss Mattie sets a stone in place. “That so?” She wipes her forehead with the back of her hand. “You know, Aaron, before you were born, this corner was as neat as a pin.”

I look around. “It’s still a good corner,” I say.

“Aaron,” Dad calls. He has more tires for me. I drag them slowly up the steep sides of my mountain. When Mama comes home, she’ll say to Dad, *William, these tires have to go*. Once I asked her if I could take my mountain to a new house. “Mountains do not move, Aaron,” she said.

Heat waves rise from the blacktop. The smoke from S&S Barbeque stings my eyes. Miss Mattie leans on her shovel. “There was once a playground in that empty lot,” she says. Then she heads down the driveway with her wheelbarrow.

At dinner, Mama shows us three houses she’s

circled. “I like this one the best.” She points to a brick one with white trim.

“I hate it,” I say.

“Aaron,” Dad says in his warning voice.

I want to snatch that pamphlet with its perfect houses and tear it into a thousand pieces, but instead I run into my room and shut the door.

That night Mama and Dad are talking so loud. Mama says, “It’s time. We’ve saved long enough. I already looked at the perfect house. Think about Aaron.”

I cover my head with my pillow so I can’t hear anymore.

Soon as I push our sign out in the morning, Miss Mattie’s granddaughter, Candace, is there. “Play with me,” she begs, grabbing my arm.

We stack tires and hide inside. We roll them down the slope. We make an obstacle course. At noon, she goes home for lunch. I climb up Tire

Continued 

Mountain and look across at the empty lot. I see the perfect spot for a tire swing in the catalpa tree.

Dad has some rope in the back of his pickup truck, but the first branch of the catalpa is way above my head. I stack six tires like a step stool, and finally I get the rope around the lowest branch. Just before dinnertime, the swing is ready. Candace is the first to try it out.

In the morning, I borrow Miss Mattie's wheelbarrow to make a tire garden. Two teenagers are watching.

"Think you're a farmer?" one asks.

I feel my throat swell.

"He grows tires," the other one says.

My hands tremble and I let go of one handle of the wheelbarrow. It wobbles and tips, and most of the dirt spills out. The boys laugh. I want to run back home and crawl into a dark tire cave where they'll never find me. I take a deep breath, set the wheelbarrow up, and shovel the dirt back in.

By the end of the week, the playground has

two tire gardens, a tire swing, a tire tunnel, and a tire sandbox. Miss Mattie's son is bringing some sand tomorrow. Mr. Lumsfield knows a man who has a tire shredder so we can put rubber mulch under the swing.

Candace comes every day to play. And a boy and his cousin from around the block. And a mother with her baby in a stroller. Sometimes those teenagers stand on the corner, watching.

Every morning I water the seeds. Soon small green shoots are sticking up all over. "How long until we see flowers?" I ask Miss Mattie.

"About the middle of June, I do recall."

"I might be gone by then," I say.

"Then I'll come get you," Miss Mattie says.

It's so hot that the tar melts on the side of the street. We take to watering twice a day. Then one morning I see a single bright pink blossom. By the end of the week there are white and yellow and pink four o'clocks all around.

That night, Dad and I sit on top of Tire

Continued 

Mountain. We see Mama inside, looking at her pamphlet again. Then she comes out and looks around. “Looks to me like you’ve made your own park right here, Aaron Jacob,” she says. Mama folds the pamphlet and uses it like a fan.

I see the moonlight on her face. “When we

do move, some day, do you think we could take a tire?” I swallow hard. “To make a tire swing?”

Mama pulls me close. “That could be arranged.”

*From Tire Mountain by Andrea Chang. Copyright ©2007 by Andrea Chang. Published by Boyds Mills Press, Inc. Used by permission.*

**How does Aaron use Tire Mountain to improve his environment?  
Be specific by providing three details from the story to support  
your answer.**

From

## *Hummingbird Park*

Some days, Mr. Chen takes our class for a walk to Hummingbird Park. It is a small park just across the street from our school. Sometimes we even have our recess at the park. But today is different.

We do not play on the swings. We do not play on the slide. And we do not play soccer.

“Listen up, class!” Mr. Chen says. “We are going to do something different today.”

We look at one another, wondering what Mr. Chen plans to do.

“When I was your age, Hummingbird Park was a lot different,” Mr. Chen explains. “It was cleaner and more beautiful than it is today. People have not treated the park with respect. So we are going to do some things to make Hummingbird Park look better.”

I never thought that the park looked so bad before. But now when I look around, I see some

papers and other things all over the ground. I guess the park really does need some care.

Mr. Chen passes around the materials we need. Everyone in the class receives a pair of rubber gloves and a plastic bag.

“The papers and things on the ground are called litter,” explains Mr. Chen. “Today we will collect the litter from around the park. I will divide you into small groups. Each group will pick up litter in one part of the park. Everyone is a member of the cleanup crew!”

Mr. Chen divides the class into groups. Then we get going.

We work very hard picking up trash. We find wet newspapers. Oh, gross! We find sticky soda cans. Yuck! We find candy wrappers, broken toys, an old shoe, and a muddy mitten. Litter, litter, litter!

My trash bag is full, so I run to Mr. Chen to

Continued 

show him my work.

“Nice work, Sadie,” Mr. Chen says, grinning. “But as you can see, there is a lot more litter to clean up. Here is another bag.”

At the end of the day, the class gathers around our teacher. We all look at the park. The park looks good! The grass looks greener because we gathered the litter.

“Good work cleaning up trash today, class,” Mr. Chen says. “But we are not quite through. Hummingbird Park still needs our help. What else can we do?”

I look around at the clean grass and I have an idea. “I know what this park needs! It needs more garbage cans.”

“Good thinking, Sadie!” Mr. Chen exclaims. “I will buy some garbage cans. I will also give you a letter to take home to your families. Maybe some families can donate garbage cans.”

In class the next day, we see Mr. Chen’s garbage cans. Some parents even bring more garbage cans.

We roll the cans to Hummingbird Park during recess.

“Okay, class, listen up!” says Mr. Chen. “Let’s get into our groups again. Each group will take garbage cans to the same part of the park you cleaned up yesterday.”

We all go to different parts of the park. We put the garbage cans in good spots. Then we gather around Mr. Chen.

“Hummingbird Park still needs our help,” says Mr. Chen. “What else can we do?”

“Let’s plant flowers!” replies Josie.

“Good thinking, Josie!” says Mr. Chen.

Back in class, Mr. Chen gives us a letter to take home. The letter tells our families about planting flowers in Hummingbird Park. We take the letter home. Our families help us get the things we’ll need for planting flowers in the park.

The next day we are ready to start planting. We have hand shovels, watering cans, and gardening gloves. And we have the flowers! We have daisies

Continued 



and petunias. We have violets and marigolds. We have some pansies, too.

We go to Hummingbird Park again for recess. We plant flowers everywhere! Hummingbird Park bursts with color!

After we finish, we gather around Mr. Chen again. We all look at the clean, colorful park.

“Great work, class,” Mr. Chen says happily. “Hummingbird Park looks beautiful!”

Mr. Chen lets us play in the park the next day. We see that other people have come to enjoy the park, too. We see some people reading on a bench. We see a man walking his dog. We play on the swings and the slide. Now Hummingbird Park is really nice.

*From Hummingbird Park by Sarah Kovatch.*  
Copyright ©2012 by Zaner-Bloser, Inc.

**How does the class improve the park? Why do they do it?  
Provide three details from the text to support your answer for  
each question.**

## **PART 2: Writing to Multiple Sources**

You will now have 70 minutes to review your notes and sources, plan, draft, and revise your essay. You may use your notes and refer to the sources. You may also refer to the answers you wrote to questions in Part I, but you cannot change those answers. Now read your assignment and the information about how your essay will be scored; then begin your work.

### **Your Assignment**

Think about how you would compare and contrast the different ways the characters in each story change their environments by making them more beautiful. Think about how Aaron used Tire Mountain and what Mr. Chen's class did to the park. Remember the details about what each character wanted, how their families and/or their communities felt, and how the projects turned out. Your assignment is to write an essay comparing and contrasting how the characters made positive changes to their environment. Support your position with information from the sources you have read. The audience for your essay will be your classmates.

### **Essay Scoring**

Your essay will be scored on the following criteria:

Continued 

**Essay Scoring** (continued)

1. **Focus and organization**—How well did you introduce your topic? How well did you group information together? How well did you use linking words to connect ideas? How well did you provide a concluding section? How well did you stay on topic throughout the essay?
2. **Elaboration of topic**—How well did you develop the topic with facts, definitions, and details?
3. **Conventions**—Did you check your punctuation, capitalization, and spelling?

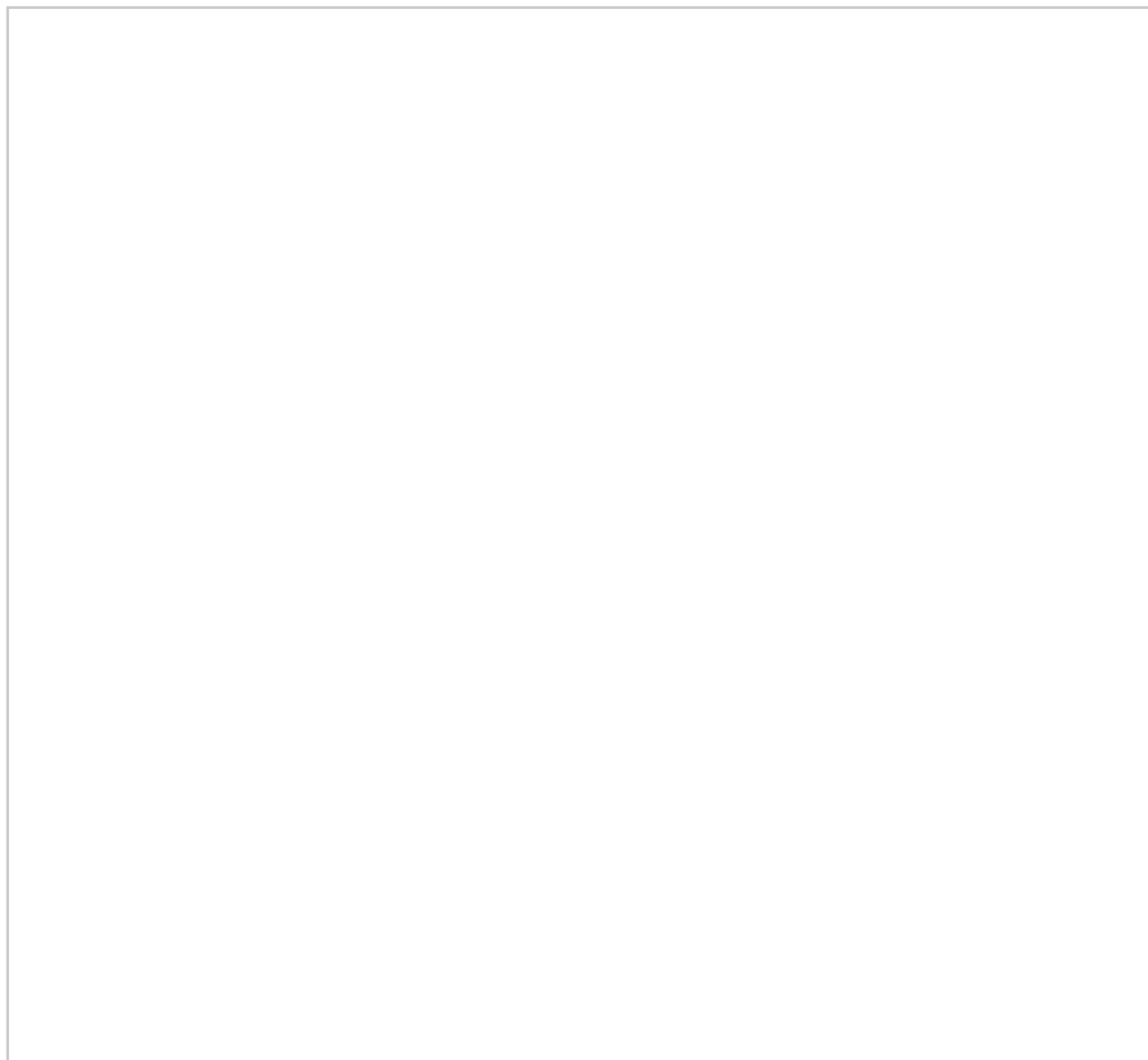
Now begin work on your essay. Manage your time carefully so that you can:

- plan your essay
- write your essay
- revise and edit for a final draft

Spell check is available to you.

Type your response in the space provided on the following page. Write as much as you need to fulfill the requirements of the task; you are not limited by the size of the response area on the screen.

Type your response below.



Go to the next  
page if you need  
more space.



**Continue your response below.**

