

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

Student Edition

Grade 3
Opinion

Name _____

Date _____

PART I: Close Reading**Your Task**

You will view three sources about how communities can work together to clean up empty lots. Then you will answer three questions about what you have learned. Later, in Part 2, you will write a speech for a town-hall meeting that describes your solution for an empty lot.

Steps to Follow

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

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

Directions for Beginning

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

From

Getting Down and Dirty!

How does a neighborhood become run-down and scary? This happens over many years. Most of the cities in the United States are old. People started living in them a long time ago. For example, New York City was first settled in the 1600s. That's over 400 years ago! As more and more people began living in the United States, cities grew and grew. More buildings were built for homes and businesses. Streets were needed so people could get from place to place. People soon crowded the streets and buildings, so more buildings were built. Cities on the East Coast, such as New York, Boston, and Philadelphia, became beehives of human activity.

As the cities became more crowded, people began to move to quieter places. Some people left the city to move to the country. Other people moved into areas right outside the city, starting new neighborhoods. Slowly, the old, crowded

neighborhoods became less crowded. They also became run-down. Few people were left to care for the buildings.

Moving to a new home can cost a lot of money. Many people chose not to move because they could not afford it. Others stayed because they felt loyal to their old neighborhoods. The residents worked to keep their homes together, but that didn't help the buildings around them where people no longer lived. Soon, many old buildings became run-down. As time passed, the empty buildings often fell down. Eventually, someone from the local government would arrive to take the buildings' ruins away.

Now, where a building once stood lies an empty lot. Someone might own the land, or the land might be owned by the local city or government. In any case, the empty plot of land is ignored with no one to take care of it. At first, children play in

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the open space. But soon it becomes crowded with tall weeds. People begin to throw trash there, such as old bottles and boxes. Even car tires, no longer needed, are tossed into the empty lot.

After some time, the lot becomes a dangerous place. As trash piles up, it attracts wild animals like rats that carry disease. Broken glass is everywhere. Children are told not to play there anymore. When strangers start meeting in the lot, people become afraid to go outside. The empty lot makes them feel unsafe in their own neighborhood.

How can people solve the problems of run-down neighborhoods and make them nice, safe places to live again? What if the residents worked together to clean up those empty, ugly lots? What if they turned those empty lots into gardens, where people could meet and grow vegetables? Could such an idea really help the community and its residents?

From *Getting Down and Dirty!* by Lisa Trumbauer.
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What are three problems an empty lot can create in a neighborhood? Give details from the text to support your answer.

Click the image to watch the video.



**Describe how people can turn an empty lot into a garden.
Provide three details from the video to support your answer.**

From
Choices to Make

The five friends were standing on an empty lot. It was full of weeds and rocks. They had just visited the toy shop across the street. Philip's mother, Mrs. Woodson, owned the toy shop.

"I think this lot would make a great playground," Iris said.

"But we have a playground at our apartment building," Emma said.

"Yes, but lots of kids in Springtown don't have a good place to play," Iris told her. "They could play here."

"Well, I think it should be turned into a parking lot," Philip said. "Most of my mom's customers drive to her shop. They need a place to park."

The adults in town were also talking about the empty lot. Some wanted to use it for a playground. Some thought the town needed more parking spaces.

The town newspaper printed letters from both

sides. Philip's mother wrote one of the letters. She wanted a parking lot for her customers. If they could not park, they would not come to her store.

Some letter writers did not want another parking lot. They wanted a place for children to play. They wanted more green space to brighten up downtown. Some thought that a nice playground would bring more people to the area.

Mrs. Ford was the third-grade teacher. She brought the newspaper to school. She read some of the letters to her class. She read letters from both sides.

Some students thought that a playground was a great idea. Others thought a parking lot was needed downtown. Soon everyone was talking at once. The room was getting louder and louder. No one was listening.

"Wait!" Mrs. Ford called. "We're not getting

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anywhere this way. Let's form two groups. Everyone who wants to use that lot for a playground, stand over by the windows."

Many of the children jumped up. They headed for the windows.

"Good," said Mrs. Ford. "Now, everyone who wants to use this land as a place to park, come up by the chalkboard."

The rest of the class stood up and walked toward the chalkboard. Everyone had an opinion.

Then Mrs. Ford said, "Each group thinks its choice is the better one. You have to show that other people agree with you. Each group will make up a petition. A petition is a piece of paper that people sign to express an idea or ask for something."

"You will ask other children to sign your petitions," Mrs. Ford told them. "If they want a playground, they will sign that group's petition. If they want a parking lot, they will sign the other petition. Let's see what other students think about that empty lot."

Two days later, the playground petition had 35 names. The parking lot petition had 21 names.

"We win!" Iris said. "We're going to have a playground!"

"But we can't make this decision," Yuki reminded her. "The adults have to do it."

"That's right," Mrs. Ford said. "Still, you can help the adults decide what to do. This is called a social decision. In a social decision, all of the people decide what is best for their community."

"How can we help the adults decide?" Philip asked.

"Well, what if we invite the adults to come to our school?" Mrs. Ford asked. "We can have a town meeting. Then everyone can talk about how to use that lot. You can tell the adults what you think, too. You can show them your petitions. Then they can decide what will help the most people in our community."

The children liked that idea. They wanted to be involved in the decision. They wrote a notice

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about the meeting in the town newspaper. The notice was printed a few days later.

Many people came to the town meeting. Mayor Santos was there. He was in charge of the meeting. Many storeowners came, too.

People took turns speaking to the crowd. Mrs. Woodson said, “We need a parking lot. More parking will help the stores. Then people who work in the stores can keep their jobs. Better parking will also bring more people to town.”

Then a father said, “I think our children are more important. They need a safe place to play. The lot should be used for a playground.”

Another man added, “A playground would also look nice. It would make the area much prettier.”

Finally, the last speaker sat down. Then Mayor Santos stood up. “You’ve heard why we should have a playground,” he said. “You’ve also heard why we should have a parking lot. Which one will help our town the most? Which will provide the greatest good for the most people?”

From *Choices to Make* by Connie Hurst Howard.
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How do Mrs. Ford's students help the community make a social decision about the empty lot? Provide three details from the story to support your answer.

PART 2: Writing to Multiple Sources

You will now have 70 minutes to review your notes and sources, plan, draft, and revise your speech. 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 speech will be scored; then begin your work.

Your Assignment

A town-hall meeting will be held to discuss plans to fix up a run-down neighborhood. Located in that neighborhood is a large empty lot. Your community is going to make a social decision about how to improve the lot. Think about the problems empty lots create and your recommended solution that will provide the greatest good for most people (a community garden, a parking lot for area stores, or a playground). Your assignment is to write a persuasive speech on this topic. Support your position with information from the sources you have reviewed. The audience for your speech will be the people at the town-hall meeting.

Speech Scoring

Your speech will be scored on the following criteria:

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Speech Scoring (continued)

1. **Statement of purpose/focus and organization**—How well did you clearly state your opinion on the topic? How well did you stay on topic starting with the introduction and ending with the conclusion?
2. **Elaboration of evidence**—How well did you provide facts and details from the sources to support your opinions? How well did you express ideas to your audience?
3. **Conventions**—Did you check your punctuation, capitalization, and spelling?

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

- plan your speech
- write your speech
- 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.

