

READING COMPREHENSION

B1 | Adults / Teens | Reading + Vocabulary | 30-40 minutes

Topic: Environment | Skills: Reading, Vocabulary, Speaking

Read the text carefully. Then answer the questions on Page 2.

The Garden Behind the Station

For years, the land behind our station was covered in weeds. When the council offered it to a gardening group, I imagined neat rows of vegetables and people who already knew what they were doing. I almost did not join because I had never grown anything successfully.

At the first meeting, the organiser asked what each person could **contribute**. One neighbour offered gardening tools. Another could build wooden boxes. I said I could only draw, which did not seem very useful. The organiser immediately asked me to design signs for the different plants.

Not everything went smoothly. The group planted more lettuce than anyone wanted, while the tomatoes grew badly in the **shade**. Some volunteers came every weekend; others visited once and disappeared. By July, the regular members were becoming tired and annoyed.

We changed the system. People chose short, **specific** jobs instead of promising to "help when possible". A watering list showed who was **responsible** on each day. We also invited neighbours to take spare vegetables, whether or not they belonged to the group.

The garden still looks less tidy than I expected. Yet I now recognise people on the train whom I would never have spoken to before. Last week, a child read one of my signs aloud and showed his father a bean plant. I have learned a little about gardening, but that small moment made me feel most useful.

Key vocabulary

contribute - give time, ideas or resources to help a shared activity

shade - an area protected from direct sunlight

specific - clear and exact rather than general

responsible - having the duty to take care of something

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

B1 | Adults / Teens | Reading + Vocabulary | 30-40 minutes

Topic: Environment | Skills: Reading, Vocabulary, Speaking

Answer in complete sentences. Use the text to help you.

1. Why did the narrator almost decide not to join?

2. How did the narrator contribute to the project?

3. What two growing problems did the group have?

4. Why were the regular volunteers becoming annoyed?

5. How did the new system make the work clearer?

6. What suggests that the project had benefits beyond growing food?

Discuss with a partner

- What could you contribute to a shared project?
- How can a group divide work fairly?

ANSWER KEY

B1 | Adults / Teens | Reading + Vocabulary | 30-40 minutes

Topic: Environment | Skills: Reading, Vocabulary, Speaking

Suggested full-sentence answers. Accept equivalent answers with the same meaning.

1. Why did the narrator almost decide not to join?

The narrator almost decided not to join because they had never grown anything successfully.

2. How did the narrator contribute to the project?

The narrator designed signs for the different plants.

3. What two growing problems did the group have?

The group grew too much lettuce, and the tomatoes grew badly in the shade.

4. Why were the regular volunteers becoming annoyed?

They were becoming annoyed because some people stopped coming and the remaining members became tired.

5. How did the new system make the work clearer?

People chose specific jobs, and a watering list showed who was responsible each day.

6. What suggests that the project had benefits beyond growing food?

The narrator now knows more neighbours and feels useful when a child learns from one of the signs.

Teaching notes

Read once for the main idea, then reread for evidence. Compare answers before discussing the two open questions.

Language and reading focus: Narrative contrast; could and responsibility expressions.

Text: Original fiction. Discussion questions have no fixed answers.