Name: _____ Date: _____

The Gap in the Tomato Fence

Circle group

Wes and Lila lived next door to each other. Each had a garden along the same wooden fence. They were not quite friends. They were more like rivals. It began in April with one question: whose tomatoes would ripen first?

Lila grew tomatoes on her side, where the afternoon sun was strongest. Wes grew green beans on poles on his side. By July, the bean vines had reached the tops of the poles. They began to lean over the fence. They gave Lila's tomatoes a long, cool shadow.

"Your beans are stealing my sun!" Lila yelled over the fence.

"Your plants are crowding my beans!" Wes yelled back.

That evening, Wes's older sister had an idea. "Tomatoes need lots of sun," she said. "Beans need something tall to climb. What if you swapped spots for the vines?"

The next morning, Wes carried two poles to the far end of Lila's garden. The fence made a shadow of its own there. Lila trimmed a few leaning vines and tied them to the new poles. Her tomatoes had full sun again. Wes's beans had a place to grow.

In August they traded bags over the fence: beans for tomatoes. "I still say mine ripened first," Lila said.

"Then I want a rematch next year," Wes said, grinning.

Questions

1. What started the rivalry?

_____

_____

2. What did Wes grow on his side?

_____

_____

3. Why was Lila upset in July?

_____

_____

4. What did Wes carry to the far end of Lila's garden?

_____

_____

5. Why was the new spot good for the beans?

_____

_____

6. Why did they trade bags in August?

_____

_____

Words to know

rivals: people who try to do better than each other
ripen: to become ready to eat
vines: long, thin plant stems that climb or creep
trimmed: cut away a little bit to make something neater
rematch: a second contest between the same people

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

The Gap in the Tomato Fence

Triangle group

Wes and Lila lived next door to each other, and each of them kept a garden along the same weathered wooden fence. They were not exactly friends. They were more like rivals, and the rivalry had started in April over a single question: whose tomatoes would ripen first?

Lila grew her tomato plants on her own side, where the afternoon sun was strongest, while Wes grew green beans on tall poles on his side. By July, the bean vines had climbed to the very tops of the poles and begun leaning across the fence, which cast a long, cool shadow over Lila's tomatoes. Lila yelled that his beans were stealing her sun, and Wes yelled back that her plants were crowding his beans.

That evening, Wes's older sister suggested a different way to look at the problem. She pointed out that tomatoes need plenty of sun, while beans only need something tall to climb, so perhaps they should swap places for the vines.

The next morning, Wes carried two poles to the far end of Lila's garden, where the fence cast a shadow of its own. Lila trimmed several of the leaning vines and tied them to the new poles. Her tomatoes had full sun once more, and Wes's beans had a proper place to grow.

In August they traded baskets over the fence: a bag of beans for a bag of tomatoes. "I still say mine ripened first," Lila said. "Then I demand a rematch next year," Wes replied, grinning.

Questions

1. What started the rivalry between Wes and Lila?

_____

_____

2. What did Wes grow on his side of the fence?

_____

_____

3. Why was Lila upset in July?

_____

_____

4. What did Wes carry to the far end of Lila's garden?

_____

_____

5. Why was the new spot good for the bean vines?

_____

_____

6. Why do you think they traded baskets in August?

_____

_____

Words to know

rivals: people who try to do better than each other
ripen: to become ready to eat
vines: long, thin plant stems that climb or creep
trimmed: cut away a little bit to make something neater
rematch: a second contest between the same people

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

The Gap in the Tomato Fence

Square group

Wes and Lila lived next door to each other, and each of them tended a garden along the same weathered wooden fence. They were not exactly friends. They were more like rivals, and the rivalry had started in April over a single, stubborn question: whose tomatoes would ripen first?

Lila grew her tomato plants on her own side, where the afternoon sun was strongest, while Wes grew green beans on tall poles on his side. By July, the bean vines had climbed to the very tops of the poles and begun leaning across the fence, which cast a long, cool shadow over Lila's tomatoes. Lila yelled that his beans were stealing her sunshine, and Wes yelled back that her enormous plants were crowding his beans.

That evening, Wes's older sister suggested a completely different way to look at the problem. She pointed out that tomatoes require plenty of sun, while beans merely need something tall to climb, so perhaps they should swap places for the vines.

The next morning, Wes carried two poles to the far end of Lila's garden, where the fence cast a shadow of its own. Lila trimmed several of the leaning vines and tied them to the new poles. Her tomatoes enjoyed full sun once more, and Wes's beans had a proper place to flourish.

In August they traded baskets over the fence: a bag of beans for a bag of tomatoes. "I still insist that mine ripened first," Lila said. "Then I demand a rematch next year," Wes replied, grinning.

Questions

1. What started the rivalry between Wes and Lila in April?

_____

_____

2. What did Wes grow on tall poles on his side of the fence?

_____

_____

3. Why was Lila upset in July?

_____

_____

4. What did Wes carry to the far end of Lila's garden?

_____

_____

5. Why was the new spot a good place for the bean vines?

_____

_____

6. Why do you think they traded baskets in August?

_____

_____

Words to know

rivals: people who try to do better than each other
ripen: to become ready to eat
vines: long, thin plant stems that climb or creep
trimmed: cut away a little bit to make something neater
rematch: a second contest between the same people

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

For the teacher: The Gap in the Tomato Fence

Each student sheet carries a shape, not a level. The same topic and facts, written three ways.

Circle: The Gap in the Tomato Fence

Easier · 215 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 2.8

1. A question about whose tomatoes would ripen first.
2. Green beans on poles.
3. The bean vines leaned over and shaded her tomatoes.
4. Two poles.
5. The vines had something tall to climb without blocking the tomatoes' sun.
6. They were no longer rivals and shared what they grew.

Triangle: The Gap in the Tomato Fence

This passage · 251 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 7.3

1. A question about whose tomatoes would ripen first.
2. Green beans on poles.
3. The bean vines leaned over the fence and shaded her tomatoes.
4. Two poles.
5. The vines had something tall to climb without blocking the tomatoes' sun.
6. They had stopped being rivals and now shared what they grew.

Square: The Gap in the Tomato Fence

Harder · 255 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 7.9

1. A question about whose tomatoes would ripen first.
2. Green beans.
3. The bean vines leaned across the fence and shaded her tomatoes.
4. Two poles.
5. The vines had something tall to climb without blocking the tomatoes' sun.
6. They had stopped being rivals and now shared what they grew.