Spot On Science & Technology

Our School Garden

Benchmark EDUCATION

by Kathy Furgang

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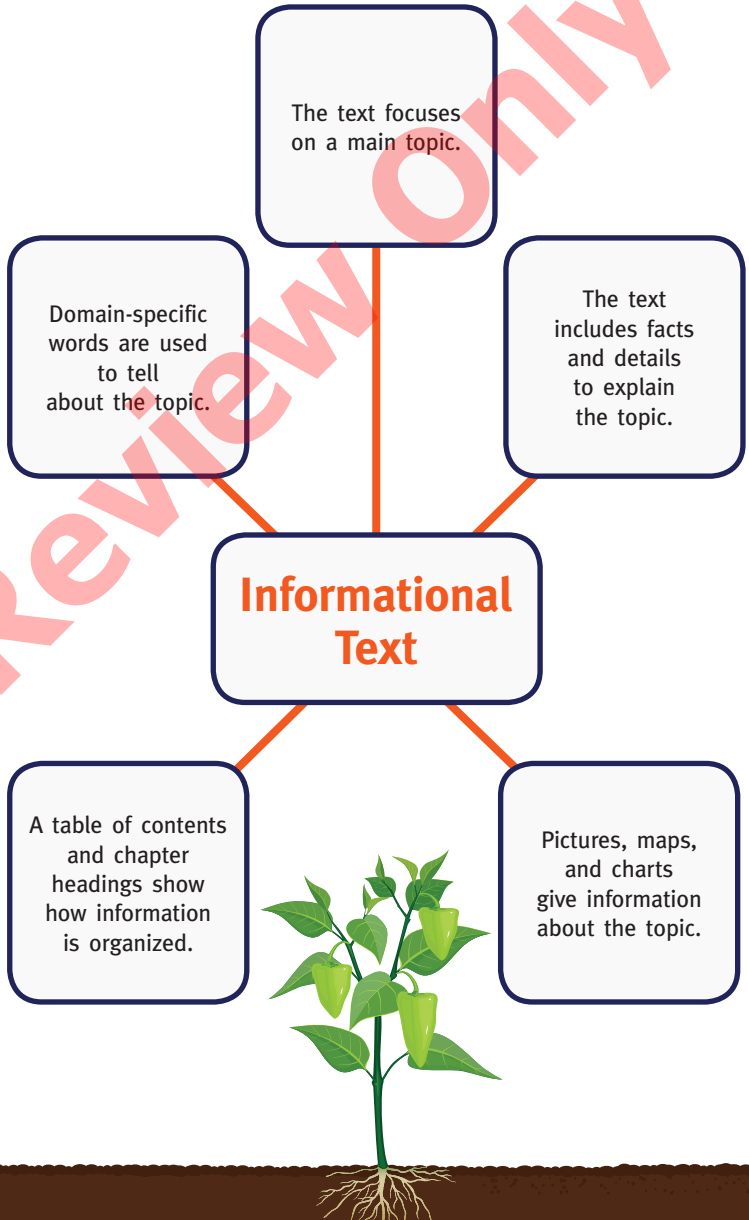

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CHAPTER 1

Garden Space

Some big cities have big **skylines**. They have big crowds. They also have a big problem. There's very little space for gardens!

People who want to grow their own food may have little space to do it. People who want to grow beautiful flowers may have little space, too.

▲ Big cities often do not have large open spaces for gardens.

Some city schools try to solve this problem. They use small spaces to make their own gardens. Students measure the space they can use. Then they plant seeds and water the soil. Sunlight helps the seeds grow into plants.

▲ These students must be creative when finding garden space.

Green Ideas

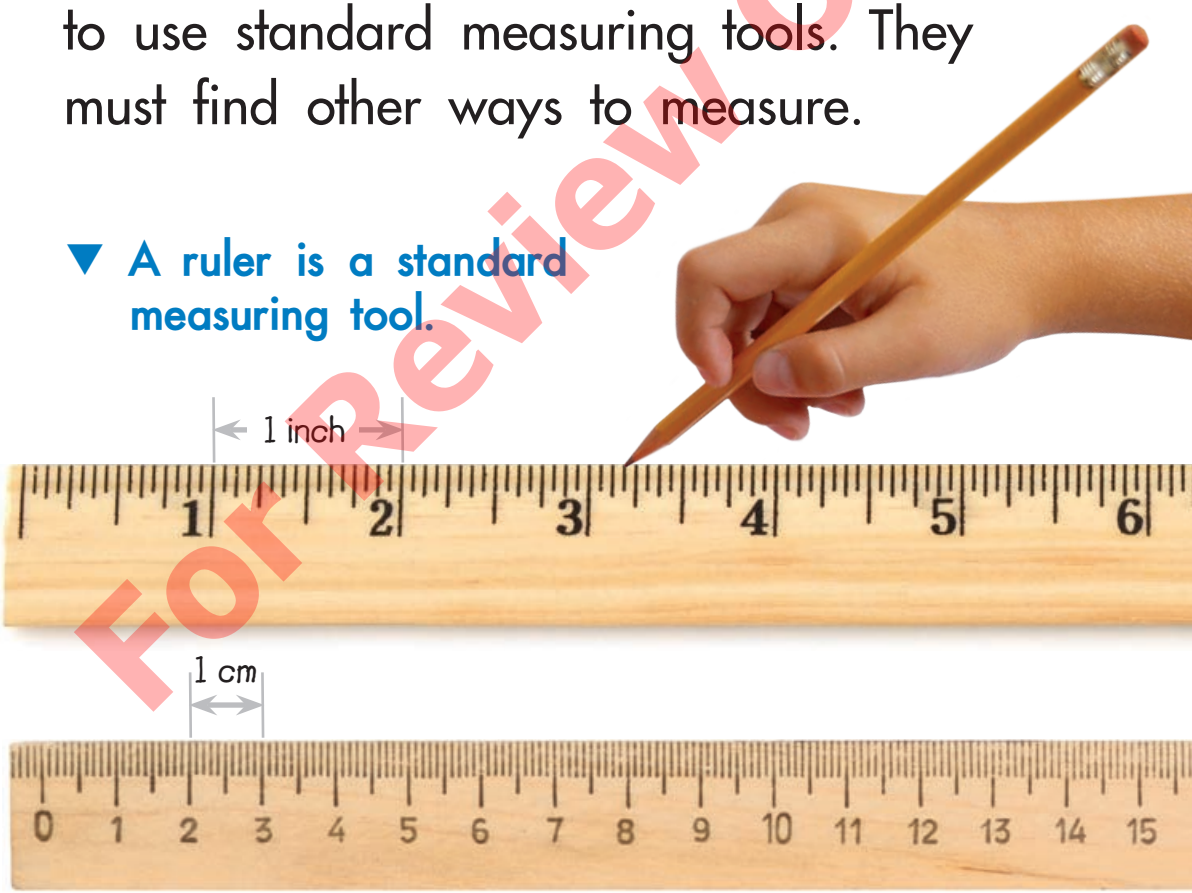
A class of students plans to make a garden. The garden will need sunlight. It will need a way to get water easily. The plants in the garden cannot be crowded together.

People grow gardens in community spaces, like **warehouses** or local parks. The students will use the rooftop of their school.

◀ A rooftop is a great place to grow a garden.

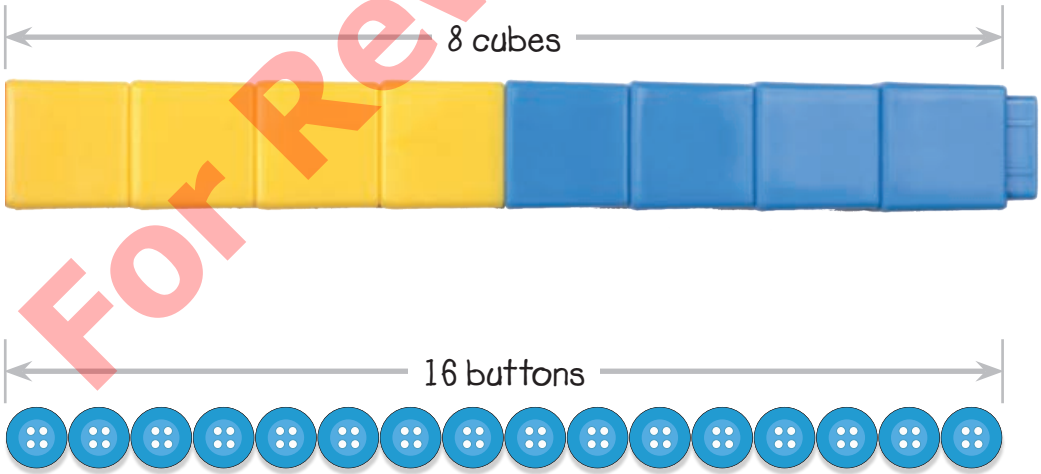
First, the students must **measure** the space. A ruler is a tool that measures length. Each **unit** on the ruler is exactly the same length. This is called a **standard** unit. However, the students are not going to use standard measuring tools. They must find other ways to measure.

▼ A ruler is a standard measuring tool.



The students must make their garden with **nonstandard** measuring tools. Nonstandard tools use objects such as cubes to measure length. Even buttons, crayons, or a person's hands or feet can be used to measure.

▼ Cubes and buttons can be nonstandard measuring tools.



The students get to work measuring garden boxes. They want to use hands or feet. But everyone's hands and feet are different sizes. So they choose just one person. That person's sneaker is one unit.

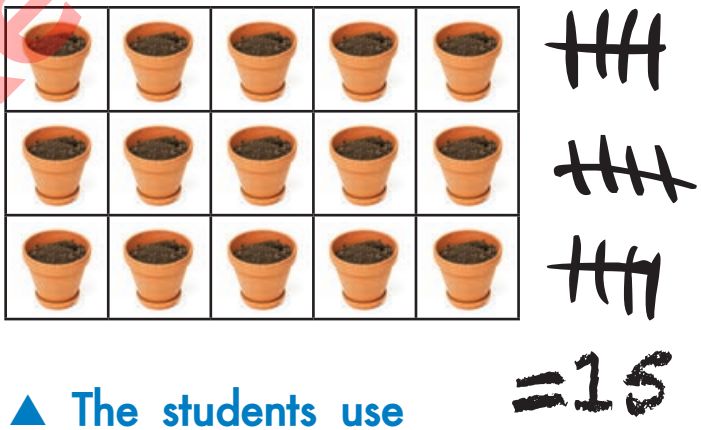
▼ A shoe can be a nonstandard tool to measure a garden.

Now it is time to gather more soil for planting. **Volume** is the amount of matter that a space can hold. The students use a nonstandard unit for measuring volume. They use flowerpots. The pots are all the same size. To make their garden, the students need to fill many pots with soil.

▲ The students fill several pots with soil to make their garden.

The students can use any size pot as a nonstandard measuring tool. But they must use that same pot size for all of their measurements. The total amount of soil in the garden is equal to the total number of pots of soil they used. They tally the number of pots to find the total volume of soil.

1 pot



▲ The students use a tally chart to find the total.