The Default Choice

Analyze how a practical argument builds its case.

11.CL.11.c "Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning supported by relevant and sufficient evidence, making rhetorical choices that convey a specific tone or style..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the claim and two pieces of evidence, circle transitions that connect ideas, and number the sentence that answers an objection and the sentence that states a larger implication. Use your marks to trace how the argument moves from a proposal to a conclusion.

Print Both Sides

1 A school can announce its values in the smallest settings menu. When teachers print a ten-page reading packet on one side of each sheet, each copy uses ten sheets. Printing that same packet on both sides uses five. For 150 students, that choice saves 750 sheets on a single assignment. Our school should make double-sided printing the default for classroom handouts, while allowing teachers to choose single-sided copies when a lesson requires them. A default does not ban another option; it makes the less wasteful option the one we choose unless there is a reason to change it.

2 The arithmetic matters because routine decisions multiply. If that ten-page packet is distributed four times during a term, double-sided printing saves 3,000 sheets for the same 150 students. Those numbers do not prove that every document belongs on two-sided pages: worksheets with space for notes may work better with blank backs. Yet this objection supports an exception, not the current default. Teachers can print those worksheets on one side and print readings on both. This distinction keeps the policy practical rather than turning a modest conservation measure into a rule that interferes with instruction.

3 Moreover, the way a school explains this choice matters. A notice that scolds teachers for using paper would invite resentment, while a clear printing guide would show respect for their judgment. The guide could state the sheet savings for a sample packet, show how to change the setting, and name situations that call for single-sided copies. In short, changing the default will not solve every problem of school waste, but it can turn a repeated, almost invisible choice into a deliberate one. When a school makes responsible habits easy without limiting good teaching, its daily operations begin to match its stated priorities.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What policy does the writer propose, and how does the 150-student packet example support it?

2. Why does the writer extend the packet calculation to four distributions? Explain what this evidence adds to the argument.

3. How does the sentence beginning with "Yet" respond to the concern about worksheets? Explain how that response affects the argument's tone.

4. What larger implication does the final sentence draw from the printing policy? How does "In short" help the writer reach it?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write one paragraph arguing whether your school should set classroom lights to turn off automatically when rooms are empty. Include a claim, two specific reasons or pieces of evidence, a fair response to one concern, at least two purposeful transitions, and a conclusion with a larger implication. Use a measured tone.

ANSWER KEY

The Default Choice

GRADE 11 · 11.CL.11.c

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the claim and two pieces of evidence, circle transitions that connect ideas, and number the sentence that answers an objection and the sentence that states a larger implication. Use your marks to trace how the argument moves from a proposal to a conclusion. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What policy does the writer propose, and how does the 150-student packet example support it?	**The writer proposes double-sided printing as the default, with exceptions. A ten-page packet for 150 students would use 750 fewer sheets when printed on both sides.**
2	Why does the writer extend the packet calculation to four distributions? Explain what this evidence adds to the argument.	**Four distributions would save 3,000 sheets. The larger total shows how a routine printing choice can add up over a term.**
3	How does the sentence beginning with "Yet" respond to the concern about worksheets? Explain how that response affects the argument's tone.	**It treats worksheets that need blank backs as a reason for an exception, not a reason to reject the default. Acknowledging the concern gives the argument a practical, measured tone.**
4	What larger implication does the final sentence draw from the printing policy? How does "In short" help the writer reach it?	**The final sentence suggests that daily school practices can reflect the school's stated priorities. "In short" signals a move from the policy's details toward that broader conclusion.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Our school should set classroom lights to turn off automatically when rooms are empty. A 40-watt lamp left on for one unnecessary hour uses 40 watt-hours of electricity, and that use can recur whenever someone forgets the switch. In addition, automatic shutoff would spare staff from checking every room after school. A sensor might turn lights off while a student sits still, so each room should have a manual override. With that safeguard, the school can reduce avoidable electricity use without disrupting work. The policy would also show that conserving resources belongs in everyday decisions, not just in announcements.

Accept equivalent explanations that connect the passage's evidence, transitions, objection, and conclusion to their roles in the argument. For the open task, look for specific support, a genuine concern and response, purposeful transitions, a measured tone, and an implication beyond the lighting policy.