Who Gets to Wait?

Read a public notice alongside the lives it affects.

11.CL.6 "Analyze a text's explicit and implicit meanings to make inferences about its theme and determine the author's purpose."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline what the city says the new rail is meant to do. Circle two details that suggest an effect the notice does not mention, then number those details in the order they appear.

The Rail at Maple Street

1 On Monday, a silver rail replaced the wooden bench at the Maple Street bus stop. The city's notice called the change an effort to "keep sidewalks clear and buses on schedule." At seven, commuters lined up beneath the shelter while rain tapped the plastic roof. Mrs. Alvarez, who cleaned the bakery before dawn, leaned against the rail and shifted her grocery bag from one hand to the other. She used to rest on the bench between her shift and the bus. Now the rail tilted just enough that sitting on it required more balance than she could spare.

2 I had once seen two men sleep on that bench after the last bus. A shop owner had complained that the stop looked crowded, though there was room to pass. By Thursday, a handwritten sign appeared on the rail: "Thank you for keeping this area moving." The sign did not say who had asked for the change. Mrs. Alvarez read it, then stood outside the shelter so a student with crutches could hold the only vertical post. When the bus arrived, its driver waited while both passengers boarded. Neither passenger said anything about the sign.

3 On Friday, I carried a folding chair to the stop and set it beside the rail. Mrs. Alvarez thanked me, but she waved the student toward it first. Before either could sit, a worker came to inspect the shelter. He looked at the chair, then at the printed notice fastened above the rail. "I can report that the new setup isn't working for everyone," he said. He took out his phone and photographed the empty chair. The bus came, and we folded it away. The notice stayed where it was.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What goal does the city's notice state? What different priority might the words "keeping this area moving" imply?

2. What does Mrs. Alvarez's action toward the student suggest about her values? Support your inference with a detail.

3. State a theme of the passage. Support it with one detail from the first paragraph and one from a later paragraph.

4. Why might the author end with "The notice stayed where it was" instead of telling us whether the rail was changed? Explain how this ending serves the author's purpose.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a new four-sentence ending that begins after the worker says he can report the problem. Then add two sentences stating the theme your ending implies and explaining how one new detail serves your purpose.

ANSWER KEY

Who Gets to Wait?

GRADE 11 · 11.CL.6

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline what the city says the new rail is meant to do. Circle two details that suggest an effect the notice does not mention, then number those details in the order they appear. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What goal does the city's notice state? What different priority might the words "keeping this area moving" imply?	**The notice says the rail will keep sidewalks clear and buses on schedule. The wording may imply that preventing people from staying at the stop matters more than giving them a place to rest.**
2	What does Mrs. Alvarez's action toward the student suggest about her values? Support your inference with a detail.	**She considers the student's need despite her own discomfort. She stands outside the shelter so the student with crutches can hold the only vertical post.**
3	State a theme of the passage. Support it with one detail from the first paragraph and one from a later paragraph.	**A change presented as an improvement can exclude people whose needs were overlooked. Mrs. Alvarez can no longer rest on the bench, and the student with crutches needs the shelter's only vertical post for support.**
4	Why might the author end with "The notice stayed where it was" instead of telling us whether the rail was changed? Explain how this ending serves the author's purpose.	**The unchanged notice leaves the problem unresolved even after the worker hears about it. This ending draws attention to the gap between recognizing a harmful design and fixing it.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

On his phone, the worker opened a report and asked Mrs. Alvarez what the rail made difficult. He wrote down her answer and the student's account of waiting on crutches. Before leaving, he taped a new note beside the notice: "Tell us what this stop needs." When the bus arrived, he promised to bring their words to the next public meeting. This ending suggests that public spaces improve when the people who use them are heard. I included the worker recording specific experiences to show how listening can begin to turn a complaint into public action.

Accept other supported inferences about the notice, the characters, or the unresolved ending. For Your Turn, look for four new story sentences followed by two sentences that connect an implied theme, a specific detail, and the writer's purpose.