Messages in Motion

Read a small change in public space for its larger meaning.

12.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 two details that show what the screen improves, circle two details that show what may be lost, and write 1 beside a detail that suggests the story's larger message. Use these contrasts to infer why the writer tells this story.

At the Cedar Street Stop

1 On Monday, a crew unscrewed the corkboard at the Cedar Street bus stop. For years, it had held tutoring offers, lost-cat notices, and handwritten directions to the winter shelter. My mother had once pinned a card there offering to mend coats for free. By noon, a narrow screen stood in its place. It flashed bus arrivals in three languages, which helped Mr. Alvarez catch the right route without asking anyone to translate. A small sign below it read, "Community announcements may be submitted online." I photographed the sign to show my mother, whose phone still has a cracked, dark screen.

2 That evening, the screen reported a ten-minute delay while rain soaked the empty stop. Mrs. Bell arrived with a paper invitation to a neighborhood meal. She had written the address in thick marker so it could be read from the curb. She looked for a pin, then held the invitation against the glass until the wind bent it. "I can post it for you," I said. She thanked me but folded the paper into her pocket. On the ride home, I realized I had offered to carry her message without asking who would read it afterward.

3 On Friday, the screen showed the meal invitation between arrival times and a notice about a closed bridge. Mrs. Bell saw it and smiled. Then the invitation vanished to make room for an advertisement for luxury apartments. A man beside her asked when the meal would start, but the address was gone before she could point. She told him anyway, and he wrote it on his hand. As the bus pulled in, I noticed two pale squares on the shelter wall where the board's screws had been. The screen was bright enough to see, but its messages did not stay long enough to study.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What does the online submission rule imply about who may struggle to share an announcement? Support your inference with a detail.

2. What does the narrator's thought on the ride home imply about the difference between posting a message and reaching its intended readers?

3. Infer a theme from both the screen's help to Mr. Alvarez and what happens to Mrs. Bell's invitation.

4. Why might the writer end with the marks left by the corkboard and the screen's changing messages? Explain the effect of both details.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write an alternative ending of 75 to 100 words in the narrator's voice. Include one new action at the stop, show a benefit and a limitation of the screen, and imply a theme about whose voices can be heard without stating it directly.

ANSWER KEY

Messages in Motion

GRADE 12 · 12.CL.6

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two details that show what the screen improves, circle two details that show what may be lost, and write 1 beside a detail that suggests the story's larger message. Use these contrasts to infer why the writer tells this story. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What does the online submission rule imply about who may struggle to share an announcement? Support your inference with a detail.	**People without a working phone or other internet access may struggle to submit announcements. The narrator's mother has a cracked phone with a dark screen.**
2	What does the narrator's thought on the ride home imply about the difference between posting a message and reaching its intended readers?	**Submitting Mrs. Bell's invitation would not ensure that her neighbors see it. The narrator realizes that offering to post it did not address who would read it.**
3	Infer a theme from both the screen's help to Mr. Alvarez and what happens to Mrs. Bell's invitation.	**A public tool can make information more accessible while making community messages harder to find. The translated arrivals help Mr. Alvarez, but the invitation disappears before Mrs. Bell can show its address.**
4	Why might the writer end with the marks left by the corkboard and the screen's changing messages? Explain the effect of both details.	**The writer invites readers to question what is lost in a change presented as progress. The marks recall the former place for notices, while the changing screen shows how quickly a useful message can vanish.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The next morning, the screen announced that the number 8 would arrive early, and I called to Mrs. Bell before she missed it. She smiled, then handed a newcomer a paper with the meal address. He studied the unfamiliar street name. I started to offer my phone, but she pointed across the road and explained the turn herself. When our bus came, he tucked the paper into his wallet. Behind us, the invitation appeared on the screen for a moment, then disappeared beneath another arrival time.

Accept inferences supported by passage details, including interpretations that recognize both the screen's benefits and its limits. The alternative ending should add an action rather than repeat the passage's final events.