Picture the Choice

How images and words shape a decision

SS24.P.12 "Explain processes involved in problem-solving and decision-making, including cognitive processes related to thinking and concept formation. 12a Explain the role of mental images and verbal symbols in the thought process."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two places where Maya uses a mental image, circle the three words on her note card, and number the steps in which she imagines a layout, checks it, and chooses a site.

Where Should the Water Go?

1. At the school fair, Maya must choose where to place a water refill station. A crowded doorway and a sunny courtyard are the two possible sites. Before moving anything, she pictures students leaving the gym, filling bottles, and returning to their booths. In her mind, a table beside the doorway narrows the walking space. This mental image lets her test a possible layout without carrying a heavy table. But her picture is based on what she remembers, not a live view of every student. She checks the doorway at lunchtime to see whether the crowd matches her image.

2. Maya also thinks with verbal symbols: words that stand for ideas rather than look like them. On a note card, she writes "access," "safety," and "heat." These labels help her compare both sites using the same concerns. She gives "access" a clear meaning: students can reach the station without blocking a path. Under that meaning, the doorway seems less accessible than it first sounded. The word "safe" alone cannot show exactly where a line will form, so she combines her labels with what she observed. Naming the concerns keeps one attractive feature, a short walk, from deciding everything.

3. During the fair, Maya notices that students stand in shade while they wait for drinks, but not while they rush between booths. She groups these actions into two concepts, "waiting" and "passing through." A concept collects examples that share a useful feature; it helps her predict where a refill line might grow. She now imagines a line at the courtyard's shaded edge, where people can wait without blocking the main walkway. She chooses that site and plans to watch the line after opening. If the line reaches the walkway, she can move the table. Her decision remains open to new evidence.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does Maya's first mental image help her test the doorway site before moving a table?

2. Why does Maya check the doorway at lunchtime instead of relying only on her mental image?

3. How do the words on Maya's note card help her compare the two sites?

4. How do the concepts "waiting" and "passing through" affect Maya's final decision?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Your school must place a lost-and-found bin either near the main entrance or outside the office. In four to five sentences, describe a mental image you would use, name two verbal labels for comparing the sites, and explain how they would guide a decision you could check in real life.

Picture the Choice

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two places where Maya uses a mental image, circle the three words on her note card, and number the steps in which she imagines a layout, checks it, and chooses a site. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does Maya's first mental image help her test the doorway site before moving a table?	**She pictures students using the station and sees that a table beside the doorway could narrow the walking space.**
2	Why does Maya check the doorway at lunchtime instead of relying only on her mental image?	**Her image comes from memory, so she checks whether it matches the actual crowd.**
3	How do the words on Maya's note card help her compare the two sites?	**They give her the same concerns, access, safety, and heat, to consider at both sites.**
4	How do the concepts "waiting" and "passing through" affect Maya's final decision?	**They help her predict where a line may grow and choose a courtyard spot where waiting students may not block people passing through.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I picture students stopping at a bin beside the main entrance while others hurry inside. In that image, the stopped students might block the doorway. I would compare the sites using the labels "easy to find" and "clear path." I would choose the office location if students can find it without crowding the hall. I would watch the office hallway during a busy break to check whether the path stays clear.

Accept other supported interpretations of how Maya uses images and words. For the open task, look for a specific imagined scene, two useful labels, a decision, and a way to check it.