

Marsh or Pavement

Trace how a public argument builds its case.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.6 "Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance that point of view or purpose."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two statements that reveal the author's position, then circle three rhetorical choices, such as a question, contrast, vivid image, or repeated words, that make the position persuasive.

A Letter to the Council

- ① At the edge of our town, Willow Marsh holds rainwater after storms, shelters herons, and gives families a place to walk beside cattails. The council is considering a proposal to drain part of the marsh for a parking lot. I urge council members to reject it. A parking lot may make one afternoon easier, but the marsh works every day, quietly storing floodwater and providing habitat. When we trade a living wetland for more pavement, what do we gain, and what do we lose? We lose a natural neighbor that cannot be rebuilt overnight.
- ② Supporters say nearby shops need convenient spaces for customers. Their concern deserves attention, yet convenience is not the same as necessity. The town already has an underused municipal lot two blocks away, while Willow Marsh has no substitute. Wetlands can slow and store water during heavy rains, helping reduce flooding downstream. Picture a sudden summer storm: water rushes across roofs and streets, then has nowhere to go except basements and roads. The choice is not between progress and nature. It is between a short walk today and a safer, healthier town for years.
- ③ Some residents may ask whether preserving the marsh is worth delaying a construction project. It is. We can improve signs to direct drivers to the existing lot, add a crosswalk, and support local stores without destroying the place that protects our streets. Let us choose solutions that serve shoppers and safeguard homes. Let us keep the marsh for runners, birds, children, and the next hard rain. Council members should vote against the drainage plan and ask planners to study the existing parking spaces before approving any new pavement.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What is the author's purpose in this letter, and what point of view does the author express?

2 What effect does the rhetorical question in paragraph 1 have on the reader?

3 How does the author use the supporters' concern about customer parking in paragraph 2 to advance the argument?

4 How does the repeated phrase "Let us" in paragraph 3 support the author's purpose?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Choose a school or community issue. Write a 90-110-word message that takes a clear position and uses at least two rhetorical techniques, such as a rhetorical question, contrast, repetition, vivid language, or a concession. After your message, write one sentence that names the two techniques and explains how they support your position.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline two statements that reveal the author's position, then circle three rhetorical choices, such as a question, contrast, vivid image, or repeated words, that make the position persuasive. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What is the author's purpose in this letter, and what point of view does the author express?	The author aims to persuade the council to reject the drainage plan. The author believes preserving Willow Marsh is more valuable than adding a new parking lot.
2	What effect does the rhetorical question in paragraph 1 have on the reader?	It asks readers to weigh what the town would lose by replacing the wetland with pavement, making the loss seem serious and personal.
3	How does the author use the supporters' concern about customer parking in paragraph 2 to advance the argument?	The author acknowledges the concern, then argues that convenience is not necessary because an underused lot already exists and the marsh has no substitute.
4	How does the repeated phrase "Let us" in paragraph 3 support the author's purpose?	The repetition includes readers in the decision and creates a shared call to protect the marsh while supporting local businesses.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Our school should add more covered tables to the courtyard. On sunny days, students either crowd indoors or eat quickly under direct sun. A few sturdy shade structures would give students a place to talk, read, and recharge between classes. Why should fresh air be available only to students who can tolerate the heat? Covered tables are not a luxury. They are a practical way to make the courtyard useful in more kinds of weather. Let us create a campus that welcomes students outside, not one that sends them back into crowded hallways. The rhetorical question challenges unfair access, while the contrast between welcoming students outside and sending them into halls emphasizes the proposal's benefit.

Accept equivalent statements of the author's purpose and point of view when they connect preserving the marsh to rejecting the parking plan. For rhetorical analysis, accept supported explanations of how a technique influences readers or strengthens the argument.