Build the Argument

Trace how a writer connects claims, evidence, and responses.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.6-8.1c "Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each claim or counterclaim, circle words or phrases that link ideas, and number the reasons or evidence that support the main claim. These marks will show how the writer builds a connected argument.

A Garden for School

(1) Some middle schools should replace a small section of lawn with native plant gardens. Native plants, which grow naturally in a region, can provide food and shelter for local insects and birds. For example, monarch caterpillars eat milkweed, a native plant in much of the United States. A garden would also give science classes a place to observe pollination and food webs. Because students could study living things outdoors, the garden would support learning while improving habitat on the school grounds.

(2) Some people argue that a native garden would cost too much to install and maintain. It is true that plants, soil, and tools require money at first. However, the garden need not cover a large area, and families or local gardening groups may donate supplies. In addition, native plants usually need less watering after they become established than many grass lawns do. Therefore, choosing hardy local species could reduce later costs and make the project manageable for the school.

(3) Even with a limited budget, a school can begin with a few garden beds near a walkway. Students could measure plant growth, record insect visits, and share their findings with classmates. As a result, the space could serve both wildlife and school learning. The cost concern deserves planning, but it does not outweigh the benefits described above. For these reasons, the school should create a small native plant garden and review its progress after one year.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What is the writer's main claim in the first paragraph?

2. Which phrase introduces the monarch caterpillar example, and what idea does the example support?

3. What concern does the writer introduce in paragraph 2, and which word signals the shift to the writer's response?

4. What cause-and-effect relationship does “Therefore” clarify in paragraph 2?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence recommendation for one improvement at your school. State a claim, give at least two reasons, include a counterclaim and response, and use linking words or phrases to connect your ideas.

ANSWER KEY

Build the Argument

GRADE 7 · WHST.6-8.1c

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline each claim or counterclaim, circle words or phrases that link ideas, and number the reasons or evidence that support the main claim. These marks will show how the writer builds a connected argument. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What is the writer's main claim in the first paragraph?	**Some middle schools should replace a small section of lawn with native plant gardens.**
2	Which phrase introduces the monarch caterpillar example, and what idea does the example support?	**"For example" introduces it. The example supports the idea that native plants provide food or habitat for local insects.**
3	What concern does the writer introduce in paragraph 2, and which word signals the shift to the writer's response?	**The concern is that a native garden would cost too much to install and maintain. "However" signals the shift to the response.**
4	What cause-and-effect relationship does "Therefore" clarify in paragraph 2?	**Because hardy native plants usually need less watering after they are established, choosing them could reduce later costs and make the project manageable.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Our school should add a shaded outdoor reading area near the library. First, students could use the space to read quietly during lunch, and it could ease crowding in the library. Some people may argue that benches and shade structures cost too much; however, the school could begin with donated picnic tables and a small canopy. Therefore, a modest outdoor reading area would improve access to a calm reading space without requiring a large project.

Accept equivalent descriptions of the claim, counterclaim, and relationships among ideas. In the open response, look for a clear claim, connected reasons, a counterclaim with a response, and accurate linking language such as first, however, because, or therefore.