

Harbor of Persuasion

Trace purpose, appeals, and structure in a Classical-style civic speech.

ELA.11.R.2.3 “Analyze an author’s choices in establishing and achieving purpose(s) in speeches and essays from the Classical Period.”

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the speaker’s main claims and circle words or phrases that appeal to shared values, fear, or practical reasoning. Number the main strategy used in each paragraph to trace how the speaker builds the purpose.

A Fictional Athenian Assembly Speech, c. 350 BCE

- ① Citizens of Athens, the stones of the Piraeus harbor wall are splitting where winter waves strike them. I ask the Assembly to set aside part of this year’s harbor tax for repairs before the next sailing season. Some may say that the city has greater needs, yet a broken wall does not wait politely for a convenient debate. When merchants fear the sea entrance, grain ships choose safer ports, and families pay more at the market. Let us protect the harbor that carries food, trade, and news into our city.
- ② Our fathers did not build the Long Walls so that we could admire their age while neglecting their purpose. They understood that public works join private households to the safety of the whole city. Consider the cost of action: a small share of harbor dues already collected would pay skilled masons to finish the most damaged section in thirty days. Consider the cost of delay: one severe storm could tear open the entrance, spoil cargo, and require far more silver afterward. Wise citizens spend carefully, but they do not confuse delay with thrift.
- ③ Still, I do not ask you to approve spending without limits. Elect three citizens to inspect the work each week and post the payments where any passerby may read them. By requiring open accounts, we show our allies and our children that Athens can govern its resources as carefully as it guards its freedom. Vote for the repairs today, not because fear has mastered us, but because foresight belongs to free people. A city worthy of its fame meets a visible danger with an honest plan and a united decision.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE Use the passage

1 What is the speaker's main purpose, and which opening choices make that purpose clear?

2 How does the comparison between the cost of action and the cost of delay in paragraph 2 support the speaker's purpose?

3 Why does the speaker refer to the Long Walls and to the safety of the whole city?

4 How does paragraph 3 address a possible objection, and how does that choice help the speaker persuade the audience?

3 YOUR TURN Your own words

Write a four-sentence civic mini-speech urging action on a school or community issue. State your purpose, use a shared value, give a concrete consequence, and answer one concern; then write one sentence explaining how two of your choices help achieve your purpose.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline the speaker's main claims and circle words or phrases that appeal to shared values, fear, or practical reasoning. Number the main strategy used in each paragraph to trace how the speaker builds the purpose. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What is the speaker's main purpose, and which opening choices make that purpose clear?	The speaker wants the Assembly to fund harbor-wall repairs before the sailing season. The speech opens with visible damage, a direct request for tax money, and consequences for trade and food prices.
2	How does the comparison between the cost of action and the cost of delay in paragraph 2 support the speaker's purpose?	It presents repairs as the less expensive, sensible choice and argues that waiting could cause greater damage and expense.
3	Why does the speaker refer to the Long Walls and to the safety of the whole city?	The reference connects the proposal to Athens's respected past and appeals to civic responsibility by showing that the harbor affects every household.
4	How does paragraph 3 address a possible objection, and how does that choice help the speaker persuade the audience?	The speaker acknowledges concern about uncontrolled spending, then proposes inspectors and public payment records. This makes the plan seem accountable and trustworthy.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

School board members, add covered bike racks beside the east entrance before the rainy season. Our school should protect students who choose a healthy and affordable way to travel. Without dry, secure parking, more students will leave bicycles at home or risk damaged locks and wet books. Although the racks will cost money, using the unused space near the entrance will keep the project limited and useful. The appeal to student safety and the practical response to cost make the request sound responsible and urgent.

Accept answers that identify the speaker's purpose and explain how specific rhetorical choices, such as evidence, appeals, structure, concession, or proposed oversight, advance that purpose. For Part 3, accept varied issues if the response includes all required elements and a valid explanation of the choices.