Words That Move

Track how a public comment uses language to shape a decision.

10.P.AC.1.b "Identify, apply, and analyze important, interesting, or effective uses of language, explaining or evaluating how specific word choices affect the target audience and support the text's purpose. (I/C)"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one phrase that describes the current lot, circle one phrase that emphasizes residents' needs, and number one phrase that calls for action. These choices show how the writer tries to persuade the City Council to approve the plaza.

A Plaza at Maple Station

(1) Members of the Riverton City Council, the vacant lot beside Maple Station should become a shaded public plaza, not another stretch of asphalt. Each afternoon, commuters, students, and older neighbors wait there with nowhere to sit out of the sun. A row of trees, benches, and a drinking fountain would turn a hard, silent corner into a place where people can pause, talk, and cool down. The proposal is modest, but its effect would reach far beyond one block. It would give daily trips a little more dignity and comfort.

(2) Some may see the plaza as a decorative extra, especially when the city has many demands. Yet the choice is not between beauty and responsibility. The lot already draws people who use the station, and a well-designed space can make that necessary walk safer and more welcoming. During summer heat, shade can lower the temperature people feel on paved surfaces. Benches also offer a resting place for someone carrying groceries or recovering from a long bus ride. Funding this work would show that Riverton notices the small burdens residents carry every day.

(3) Council members have a chance to make a practical decision that residents will recognize in their own routines. Approve the plaza plan this spring, while construction can be scheduled before next year's busiest travel season. Delaying may leave the lot unchanged for another year, with the same exposed pavement and the same missed opportunity. A city is measured not only by its largest projects, but also by the care it puts into ordinary places. Maple Station deserves to be more than a spot people hurry through. It can become a useful front porch for the neighborhood.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How do the words “hard, silent corner” shape the reader’s view of the lot? Explain how this wording supports the writer’s purpose.

2. Why does the writer contrast “a decorative extra” with “beauty and responsibility”? How could this contrast influence City Council members?

3. What effect does the phrase “small burdens residents carry every day” have on the intended audience?

4. How do the words “Approve the plaza plan this spring” and the description of delaying affect the tone of the final paragraph?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a two-sentence public comment urging your principal to make one specific school improvement. Underline one vivid phrase that shows the current problem and one phrase that presents the change as a practical responsibility.

ANSWER KEY # Words That Move

GRADE 10 · 10.P.AC.1.b

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one phrase that describes the current lot, circle one phrase that emphasizes residents' needs, and number one phrase that calls for action. These choices show how the writer tries to persuade the City Council to approve the plaza. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How do the words "hard, silent corner" shape the reader's view of the lot? Explain how this wording supports the writer's purpose.	**The words make the lot seem bleak and lifeless, which makes changing it into a plaza seem needed and worthwhile.**
2	Why does the writer contrast "a decorative extra" with "beauty and responsibility"? How could this contrast influence City Council members?	**The contrast reframes the plaza as a responsible public need rather than an optional decoration, encouraging council members to prioritize it.**
3	What effect does the phrase "small burdens residents carry every day" have on the intended audience?	**It appeals to council members' concern for residents by making ordinary difficulties seem important and deserving of attention.**
4	How do the words "Approve the plaza plan this spring" and the description of delaying affect the tone of the final paragraph?	**They create an urgent, direct tone and pressure the council to act soon rather than postpone the decision.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Principal Lee, our school entrance becomes a crowded bottleneck when buses arrive, leaving students pressed against the doors. Opening a second entrance door is a practical responsibility that would make arrival safer and calmer.

Accept annotations and responses that identify other defensible word choices and clearly explain an effect on City Council or the writer's goal. For Part 3, accept any specific improvement, provided the response has exactly two sentences and includes both required underlined language choices.