Words Build Places

Trace how connotation guides a civic debate.

11.L.V.3.a "This progression transitions to 9-12.L.V.3.b."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline four words or phrases whose associations shape your view of the rail-yard proposal. In the margin, label each one positive, negative, or mixed to show the feeling it adds.

The Rail-Yard Proposal

1 At a Riverton council meeting, planners presented a proposal for the former rail yard beside Maple Creek. Their map showed a footbridge, a small market, and new storm drains. "This infrastructure can connect neighborhoods," said engineer Lila Chen, pointing to the path that would cross the tracks. She also described the yard as an unused parcel with "room for a shared future." Several residents bent over copies of the map, tracing the proposed path from one side of the tracks to the other in pencil before speaking.

2 Residents who lived west of the tracks responded differently. Malik Ortiz called the rail yard a barrier that had divided his walk to school from the library and grocery store. He supported a bridge, but questioned whether the market would raise nearby rents. Another speaker, June Patel, called the proposal a "gateway," arguing that shade trees and benches could make the creek path welcoming. Several audience members nodded, while others wrote notes beside the market symbol. The chair placed both comments in the public record for the cost study.

3 The final vote was delayed while the council requested a cost study. Chen proposed restoration of the brick station's clock tower, whose hands stopped decades ago, and demolition of two rusted storage sheds near the creek. Ortiz asked the study to compare housing costs before and after construction. Patel asked for public meetings at the library, including translation for families who spoke languages other than English. Outside, rainwater moved through a broken culvert toward Maple Creek, making the debate about the yard feel immediate to everyone leaving the meeting that evening.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What view of the rail yard is suggested by the phrase "room for a shared future"? Explain using the context.

2. Which word does June Patel use that has a positive association, and what details around it support that association?

3. In context, how do the words "infrastructure" and "barrier" shape two different views of the rail yard?

4. How would the reader's picture of the site change because Chen proposes "restoration" for the clock tower but "demolition" for the storage sheds?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write three sentences about a proposed change at a familiar place. Use one word with a favorable association and one word with an unfavorable association to present two viewpoints, then explain how those word choices could influence readers.

ANSWER KEY

Words Build Places

GRADE 11 · 11.L.V.3.a

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline four words or phrases whose associations shape your view of the rail-yard proposal. In the margin, label each one positive, negative, or mixed to show the feeling it adds. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What view of the rail yard is suggested by the phrase "room for a shared future"? Explain using the context.	**It suggests that the site could become a useful, collective place for the community, rather than remain only an old industrial area.**
2	Which word does June Patel use that has a positive association, and what details around it support that association?	**Patel uses "gateway." Her references to shade trees, benches, and a welcoming creek path support its positive association.**
3	In context, how do the words "infrastructure" and "barrier" shape two different views of the rail yard?	**"Infrastructure" presents the proposed bridge and drains as connections that serve the community. "Barrier" presents the rail yard as an obstacle that separates places in Malik Ortiz's daily route.**
4	How would the reader's picture of the site change because Chen proposes "restoration" for the clock tower but "demolition" for the storage sheds?	**The clock tower is presented as something worth bringing back, while the rusted sheds are presented as structures to remove.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Supporters say a garden could revive the vacant corner near the bus stop. Opponents worry that paving the corner could erase a quiet place where neighbors rest. Revive makes the plan sound hopeful, while erase makes the other plan seem like a loss.

Accept other well-supported explanations of each word's associations if students cite relevant details from the passage. For the open task, accept varied topics and vocabulary when the response includes two contrasting connotations and an accurate explanation of their effects.