Words That Build

Analyze how an editorial's language builds a case for preservation.

11.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 four words or phrases that make the pump station seem valuable, and circle the two labels used to describe the building in paragraph 2. In the margin, number two details that show what people could lose if the station disappears.

Keep the Water Station Working

1 At dawn, the city's old river pumps wake before most residents do. Behind a brick wall near the bus depot, iron flywheels turn with a steady, chest-deep thrum, lifting drinking water toward homes and hospitals. The pumps are not glamorous, and their pipes do not appear on postcards. Still, they are the quiet engines of daily life. When a valve fails, kitchens fall silent, classrooms close, and emergency rooms must ration water. Our city should restore the 1912 station rather than replace it with a parking lot.

2 Restoration would cost money, but demolition carries a bill of its own. A new parking lot would erase a working landmark and leave residents with one more blank square of asphalt. The station can become a public learning site, where visitors watch the machinery, hear former operators' stories, and trace the route water travels beneath their streets. Calling the building "obsolete" makes removal sound practical. Calling it a "working archive" reveals a different truth: its gears still teach, its walls still serve, and its history is not sealed behind glass.

3 Some neighbors may ask why a city should protect machinery when housing and transit need attention. That question deserves a direct answer. Restoring the station is not a retreat into nostalgia, it is an investment in a system people rely on every day. The project could train maintenance workers, host school engineering programs, and give planners a visible record of earlier solutions to water access. Most of all, preservation tells residents that public infrastructure is more than a hidden expense. It is a shared promise, built by workers and sustained by the community that depends on it.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does the phrase “quiet engines of daily life” shape the audience’s view of the pumps and support the writer’s purpose?

2. Compare the labels “obsolete” and “working archive.” How does each label guide the audience toward a different response to the station?

3. Why does the writer list kitchens, classrooms, and emergency rooms after describing a failed valve?

4. What does the phrase “shared promise” suggest about public infrastructure? Explain how this wording supports the editorial’s argument.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 70-90-word appeal asking your school board to preserve or repair a useful but overlooked place or object at school. Use at least two deliberate words or phrases, then write two sentences explaining how those choices target the board and support your purpose.

ANSWER KEY

Words That Build

GRADE 11 · 11.P.AC.1.b

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline four words or phrases that make the pump station seem valuable, and circle the two labels used to describe the building in paragraph 2. In the margin, number two details that show what people could lose if the station disappears. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does the phrase "quiet engines of daily life" shape the audience's view of the pumps and support the writer's purpose?	**It presents the pumps as essential but easily overlooked. This encourages residents and city decision makers to see restoration as necessary.**
2	Compare the labels "obsolete" and "working archive." How does each label guide the audience toward a different response to the station?	**"Obsolete" makes demolition seem sensible because the building sounds outdated. "Working archive" emphasizes its active educational and historical value, supporting preservation.**
3	Why does the writer list kitchens, classrooms, and emergency rooms after describing a failed valve?	**The list gives concrete examples of how a water failure affects many parts of the community. It creates urgency by showing that the pumps support daily life and public safety.**
4	What does the phrase "shared promise" suggest about public infrastructure? Explain how this wording supports the editorial's argument.	**It suggests that infrastructure is a community responsibility, not merely a cost. The phrase appeals to civic duty and supports the call to preserve the station.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Keep the school greenhouse open. Its fogged windows and warm soil may look modest beside the new athletic complex, but this small room is a living laboratory. Students test seeds, measure moisture, and see biology move from diagrams into roots and leaves. Closing it would trade a daily source of discovery for empty storage. Repairing the greenhouse would protect a practical classroom and show that our school values patient, hands-on learning. The phrase "living laboratory" presents the greenhouse as active and useful, which can appeal to board members deciding how to spend school funds. The contrast between "daily source of discovery" and "empty storage" makes closure seem wasteful and supports the request to repair it.

Accept answers that identify a specific word or phrase and explain its likely effect on residents, city officials, or both. For Part 3, accept varied school topics if the appeal meets the word range, uses deliberate language, and gives two accurate explanations of audience and purpose.