Syntax Moves Minds

Track how sentence choices turn a transit concern into a public argument.

11.P.AC.1.c "Explain, analyze, and evaluate how the author's use of sentence structure and syntax affects the target audience and supports the text's purpose. (I/C)"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline every sentence of eight words or fewer. Circle the two question sentences and number the command sentences in the final paragraph to trace how the writer moves readers from concern to action.

After the Last Bus

1 At 9:45 p.m., the last bus pulls away from the hospital district. A nursing assistant watches its lights disappear, then checks her phone, calculates the cost of a ride-share, and wonders whether tomorrow's shift will be worth taking. This is not a rare inconvenience. It is a daily barrier built into the schedule. Workers who clean offices, stock shelves, prepare meals, and care for patients do not all finish work before sunset. When buses stop early, the city does not merely end a route. It narrows who can reliably reach a job, a class, or a medical appointment.

2 City leaders should treat late service as basic infrastructure, not as a luxury reserved for special events. Who benefits when a worker must choose between an expensive ride home and walking along dark roads? Who loses when a student leaves an evening lab early to catch the final bus? Extend several high-use routes by two hours. Publish clear schedules. Coordinate transfers so riders are not stranded between lines. These steps will not solve every transportation problem, but they will send a clear message: the city's opportunities should remain open after 9 p.m. A budget is also a statement of priorities.

3 Some residents may ask whether later buses would carry enough passengers to justify the cost. That question deserves evidence, and the city should collect it through rider counts, employer surveys, and pilot programs. But waiting for perfect certainty can become a decision to do nothing. Start with the routes that serve hospitals, community colleges, and major employment centers. Measure ridership. Adjust service. Report the results publicly. Then let the evidence guide the next investment. A city that plans only for commuters with nine-to-five schedules plans for only part of itself. It can do better, and it should.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. In paragraph 1, how does the long sentence about the nursing assistant affect the audience and support the writer's purpose?

2. How do the two questions in paragraph 2 affect city leaders differently than a direct statement would?

3. Analyze the effect of the two short sentences, "This is not a rare inconvenience. It is a daily barrier built into the schedule."

4. Why does the writer use the short command sentences, "Measure ridership. Adjust service. Report the results publicly," near the end?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence message to a school board asking it to create a quiet study space after school. Use one rhetorical question, one long sentence with a series, and one short command sentence, then add one sentence explaining how those choices target the board and support your purpose.

ANSWER KEY

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GRADE 11 · 11.P.AC.1.c

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline every sentence of eight words or fewer. Circle the two question sentences and number the command sentences in the final paragraph to trace how the writer moves readers from concern to action. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	In paragraph 1, how does the long sentence about the nursing assistant affect the audience and support the writer's purpose?	**Its series of actions follows the assistant's growing problem, making the cost and uncertainty of an early last bus feel personal. It supports the argument that early service creates a serious barrier.**
2	How do the two questions in paragraph 2 affect city leaders differently than a direct statement would?	**The questions require city leaders to consider who is harmed by early service, drawing them into the argument and emphasizing the human consequences of the schedule.**
3	Analyze the effect of the two short sentences, "This is not a rare inconvenience. It is a daily barrier built into the schedule."	**The brief, parallel sentences firmly reject the idea that the problem is minor and redefine it as a recurring structural barrier.**
4	Why does the writer use the short command sentences, "Measure ridership. Adjust service. Report the results publicly," near the end?	**The commands create a brisk, practical sequence of actions. They make the proposal seem measurable and responsible for an audience of city decision-makers.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Each afternoon, students wait in crowded hallways, search for an open table, and try to finish demanding work before their rides arrive. How can the school expect careful learning when many students have no quiet place to work? Open the library until 5:00 p.m. A supervised study space would give students time, calm, and access to research materials. The question highlights a problem, the long series makes the need concrete, and the short command gives the board a clear action.

Accept responses that accurately connect a specific sentence structure or syntax choice to its effect on city leaders or other intended readers and to the purpose of expanding late bus service. For Part 3, accept varied topics and wording if the response includes the required structures and a plausible explanation of audience and purpose.