The Safer Route

Analyze how a public comment is tailored to decision makers.

11.P.ST.2 "Author, Audience, & Purpose: Interpret and construct texts by developing and applying knowledge of the strategies and techniques authors use to accommodate the target audience and achieve the text's purpose."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline words or phrases that show whom the writer is addressing. Circle three phrases that use a strategy to persuade that audience, such as addressing a concern, offering evidence, or making a specific request.

Public Comment: A Bike Lane for Maple Avenue

(1) Members of the Riverbend City Council, students at Northview High need a safer way to reach school by bicycle. Each morning, riders travel along Maple Avenue, where parked cars, turning vehicles, and buses share a narrow lane. I have watched classmates wait through two light cycles because they could not cross the intersection comfortably. A protected bike lane, separated from traffic by posts or a curb, would give young riders a visible space of their own. It could also help drivers expect bicycles near the school entrance.

(2) I understand that street changes cost money and can affect parking. For that reason, the city could begin with a one-year pilot between Oak Street and the school, using flexible posts and painted markings. Transportation staff could count bicycle trips, note vehicle speeds, and ask nearby businesses about deliveries before deciding whether to make the lane permanent. This measured plan does not demand an instant citywide project. Instead, it gives the council evidence to weigh, a limited cost to approve, and a clear way to revise the design if problems appear.

(3) Please place the pilot on the September agenda and invite student riders to describe the route during public comment. Their experiences can show where a painted line is not enough and where a protected crossing would help. I am not asking the council to choose bicycles over drivers. I am asking it to test a design that lets more residents travel safely, while giving the city useful information for future street projects. A vote for the pilot would show that Riverbend plans its streets for the people who use them every day, including students who cannot yet drive.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Who is the writer's primary audience? Give two details from the passage that show how the writer addresses that audience.

2. What is the writer's main purpose? Explain how the first paragraph helps achieve that purpose.

3. What concern does the writer acknowledge in paragraph 2, and how does the proposed pilot respond to that concern?

4. How does the contrast between “not asking” and “asking” in paragraph 3 make the request more persuasive for the council?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 90 to 120 word public comment to your school principal requesting a change that would improve student life. Make your audience and purpose clear, and use at least three audience-aware strategies, such as a concrete observation, a practical response to a concern, respectful tone, or a specific request.

ANSWER KEY

The Safer Route

GRADE 11 · 11.P.ST.2

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline words or phrases that show whom the writer is addressing. Circle three phrases that use a strategy to persuade that audience, such as addressing a concern, offering evidence, or making a specific request. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Who is the writer's primary audience? Give two details from the passage that show how the writer addresses that audience.	**The Riverbend City Council. The writer directly addresses "Members of the Riverbend City Council" and asks the council to place the pilot on its agenda and vote on it.**
2	What is the writer's main purpose? Explain how the first paragraph helps achieve that purpose.	**The writer wants the council to approve a protected bike-lane pilot. Paragraph 1 describes specific dangers student cyclists face and explains how a protected lane could help.**
3	What concern does the writer acknowledge in paragraph 2, and how does the proposed pilot respond to that concern?	**The writer acknowledges that street changes can cost money and affect parking. A one-year, limited pilot using flexible posts and painted markings reduces the initial commitment and gathers information before a permanent decision.**
4	How does the contrast between "not asking" and "asking" in paragraph 3 make the request more persuasive for the council?	**It shows that the writer is not demanding that bicycles take priority over drivers. The writer presents the pilot as a balanced test that can help many residents and give the city useful information.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Principal Chen, our school should add a water-bottle filling station near the gym. At lunch and after practice, students often wait at the two fountains, and some leave without refilling bottles. I know new equipment requires funding and maintenance. The school could begin with one station in the busiest hallway and track its use for a semester. This smaller step would limit costs while showing whether the station reduces lines. Please ask the facilities committee to price a model with a filter and bottle counter, then share the estimate with student council. A reliable refill station would support students who spend long days on campus.

Accept answers that identify the city council as the audience and support claims with relevant passage details. For the open response, accept varied school-related requests if the writing clearly addresses the principal, states a purpose, meets the word range, and uses at least three purposeful audience-aware strategies.