Words at the Curb

Trace how public language guides audience response.

11.T.C.1.b "Assess the impact of voice and tone on a text's reception by the audience. (I)"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two phrases in each group's statement that reveal its voice. In the margin, label the likely tone of each statement and number one audience group that might respond strongly to it.

A Street Plan, Two Appeals

1. Riverbend's council is considering a protected bicycle lane on Market Street, a busy route between the library and the transit station. The plan would replace one row of curbside parking for six blocks and add a raised divider between cars and cyclists. Before voting, council members collected written comments and held a public hearing. The proposal matters differently to people who use the street: some arrive by car, some walk from nearby apartments, and some ride bicycles or use mobility devices. Two groups submitted statements that focused on the same plan but used sharply different language.

2. The Market Street Merchants Association wrote, "Removing parking asks customers to carry purchases farther and may make quick errands harder. We urge the council to protect convenient access while it studies the plan's effects on local stores." In contrast, a student group called Street for Everyone stated, "People cross here every day. Put a barrier between them and traffic now. A safe trip should not depend on age, income, or the kind of vehicle someone owns." Both statements were placed in the same council packet alongside maps, cost estimates, and a traffic report. Neither group disputed that the redesign would change travel patterns.

3. At the hearing, a bookstore owner displayed a delivery receipt and asked how drivers would reach the loading zone. A ninth-grade speaker described waiting beside the street after an afternoon activity, while buses and cars passed. Several council members took notes without commenting on either statement. People who did not attend will also live with the decision, including workers on early shifts, older residents, and families visiting downtown. The council packet includes the public comments, maps, cost estimates, and a traffic report. Members will review the packet before voting on a plan that could reshape how people move along Market Street.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What tone does the Merchants Association create, and what tone does Street for Everyone create? Cite one phrase from each statement that supports your answer.

2. How might the two statements lead a council member to focus on different parts of the proposal?

3. Which statement is more likely to resonate with the bookstore owner at the hearing? Explain using a detail from both the owner's situation and the statement.

4. Why should council members assess the voice and tone of these statements alongside the maps, cost estimates, and traffic report?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write two two-sentence announcements about the same school change, such as new library hours or a revised lunch schedule. Aim one announcement at students and one at families, then add one sentence predicting how your word choices may affect each audience.

ANSWER KEY

Words at the Curb

GRADE 11 · 11.T.C.1.b

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two phrases in each group's statement that reveal its voice. In the margin, label the likely tone of each statement and number one audience group that might respond strongly to it. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What tone does the Merchants Association create, and what tone does Street for Everyone create? Cite one phrase from each statement that supports your answer.	**The Merchants Association creates a cautious, practical tone through phrases such as "may make quick errands harder" and "while it studies." Street for Everyone creates an urgent, assertive tone through "Put a barrier" and "now."**
2	How might the two statements lead a council member to focus on different parts of the proposal?	**The merchants' wording directs attention to customer access, errands, and local stores. The student group's wording directs attention to crossing safety and fair access for different people.**
3	Which statement is more likely to resonate with the bookstore owner at the hearing? Explain using a detail from both the owner's situation and the statement.	**The Merchants Association statement is more likely to resonate because the owner is concerned about drivers reaching the loading zone, and the statement emphasizes parking, customer purchases, and local stores.**
4	Why should council members assess the voice and tone of these statements alongside the maps, cost estimates, and traffic report?	**Voice and tone can make certain concerns seem more urgent, reasonable, or important to listeners. The other materials help council members evaluate the plan with evidence as well as persuasive language.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Students, the library will stay open until 5:30 starting Monday. Use the extra time to print work, meet with a group, or find a quiet place to study. Families, beginning Monday, the library will remain open until 5:30 p.m. This added supervised time may help students complete schoolwork before they travel home. The first version sounds inviting and flexible, while the second sounds clear and reassuring, so families may focus on supervision.

Accept defensible tone labels and reception predictions when students support them with specific language from the passage. Responses should explain how wording affects an audience, not merely identify each group's position.