

Authority on the Page

Study how precise, measured language earns a reader's trust.

11.T.SS.2.c "Build credibility through a consistent formal, authoritative tone indicative of a confident and knowledgeable expert. (C)"

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline words or phrases that sound precise and expert, circle claims that acknowledge a limit or condition, and number each sentence that directs public action. These choices help create a formal, authoritative tone.

Trees as Public Infrastructure

- ① Urban trees are not decorative extras. They are public infrastructure that lowers neighborhood temperatures, manages stormwater, and improves air quality. During heat waves, pavement and roofs absorb solar energy and release it slowly after sunset. Tree canopies interrupt that process by shading hard surfaces and cooling the air through transpiration, the release of water vapor from leaves. A mature tree cannot erase the heat island effect by itself, but a connected canopy can reduce exposure where residents walk, wait for buses, and live. City plans should therefore treat tree coverage as a measurable health and safety need.
- ② Tree planting, however, is not automatically successful. A sapling placed in a narrow strip of compacted soil may die before it provides meaningful shade. Municipal agencies must select species that tolerate local conditions, provide adequate soil volume, and fund watering and pruning during establishment. They must also avoid concentrating investment only in affluent districts, which often already have greater canopy cover. These requirements are practical, not optional. A tree program that ignores maintenance or equitable distribution can spend public funds without delivering the promised benefits. Sound policy identifies priority blocks, sets survival targets, and reports results publicly each year.
- ③ Public participation should focus on decisions that can be evaluated. Residents can ask for maps showing existing canopy, planting locations, and summer surface temperatures. They can also ask whether the city will replace trees that fail within the first several years. These questions do not require residents to be forestry specialists. They require officials to explain goals, methods, and outcomes in clear public records. The central conclusion is straightforward: cities should expand tree canopy, but they should judge success by survival, distribution, and documented cooling, not by the number of ceremonial planting events. A credible plan states both its benefits and the conditions necessary to achieve them.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 Identify two technical or policy-specific terms from paragraph 1. How do these terms help the writer sound knowledgeable?

2 How does the statement that tree planting is "not automatically successful" strengthen the writer's credibility?

3 What action-oriented word is repeated in paragraph 2, and what stance does it create?

4 What three measures does the writer say should judge a tree program's success? Why are these measures more credible than counting ceremonial planting events?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write one 90 to 110 word recommendation to your school district about improving access to drinking water. Use a formal, confident tone, include one precise term, acknowledge one limit or condition, and name at least two actions or measures the district should take.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline words or phrases that sound precise and expert, circle claims that acknowledge a limit or condition, and number each sentence that directs public action. These choices help create a formal, authoritative tone. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Identify two technical or policy-specific terms from paragraph 1. How do these terms help the writer sound knowledgeable?	Possible terms include "transpiration," "heat island effect," and "tree coverage." They show that the writer understands the scientific process and policy issue being discussed.
2	How does the statement that tree planting is "not automatically successful" strengthen the writer's credibility?	It acknowledges that planting has limits and requires proper conditions, so the writer does not make an exaggerated claim.
3	What action-oriented word is repeated in paragraph 2, and what stance does it create?	The word "must" is repeated. It presents the listed actions as necessary requirements rather than optional suggestions.
4	What three measures does the writer say should judge a tree program's success? Why are these measures more credible than counting ceremonial planting events?	The measures are survival, distribution, and documented cooling. They assess actual results and equity rather than a symbolic event count.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The district should install potable-water refill stations in each academic building and track their use monthly. Accessible refill stations can reduce reliance on single-use bottles, but installation alone will not guarantee use. Facilities staff must test filters according to manufacturer schedules and post the most recent maintenance date at every station. Administrators should place stations near high-traffic corridors, not only inside athletic areas, and provide reusable bottles for students who need them. After one semester, the district should review usage data, maintenance costs, and student access before approving additional locations.

Accept varied annotations and responses when students identify precise vocabulary, measured qualifications, and clear recommendations supported by the passage. For the writing task, look for the required length, a consistent formal tone, a specific term, a limitation, and at least two concrete actions or measures.