Authority Under Pressure

Study how precise, evidence-based language builds trust in a public notice.

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 make claims precise, circle language that directs readers to take action, and number three references to reliable evidence or monitoring.

Communicating During Wildfire Smoke

1. Wildfire smoke presents a significant public-health risk because it contains fine particles known as $PM_{2.5}$. These particles measure 2.5 micrometers or less in diameter and can travel deep into the lungs. The Air Quality Index, or AQI, reports how polluted the outdoor air is and helps communities decide when to limit exposure. Residents should consult local AQI updates rather than relying on odor or sky color alone. Smoke can remain hazardous even when it is difficult to see, particularly when wind carries pollution across long distances.

2. Health agencies issue exposure guidance because smoke affects people differently. Children, older adults, pregnant people, and individuals with heart or lung disease face increased risk from particle pollution. During an AQI advisory, schools should move strenuous practices indoors or postpone them, according to local conditions. Buildings can reduce indoor exposure by keeping windows and exterior doors closed and by using properly maintained air filtration when available. These measures do not eliminate all risk, but they reduce the amount of outdoor particle pollution that enters occupied spaces.

3. Clear communication is essential during a smoke event. Public notices should state the hazard, identify the affected group, and give a specific action. For example, a notice that names the current AQI and directs coaches to adjust outdoor activities gives readers information they can verify and use. Vague claims, casual slang, and unsupported reassurance weaken authority because they leave readers uncertain about the evidence or the recommended response. An authoritative notice remains calm and precise. It acknowledges limits, refers to reliable monitoring, and avoids dramatic predictions that the available data cannot support.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What term does paragraph 1 use for fine particles that are 2.5 micrometers or less in diameter?

2. Copy the sentence from paragraph 1 that directs residents to use a verifiable source of information instead of personal impressions.

3. According to paragraph 2, what should schools do during an AQI advisory?

4. How does paragraph 3 explain that vague claims weaken a public notice's authority?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 70-90-word notice for families about junior varsity soccer practice when the local AQI is 165. State the hazard, give a specific action, refer to a reliable source of information, and maintain a calm, formal tone without making unsupported predictions.

ANSWER KEY

Authority Under Pressure

GRADE 11 · 11.T.SS.2.c

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline words or phrases that make claims precise, circle language that directs readers to take action, and number three references to reliable evidence or monitoring. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What term does paragraph 1 use for fine particles that are 2.5 micrometers or less in diameter?	**$PM_{2.5}$.**
2	Copy the sentence from paragraph 1 that directs residents to use a verifiable source of information instead of personal impressions.	**Residents should consult local AQI updates rather than relying on odor or sky color alone.**
3	According to paragraph 2, what should schools do during an AQI advisory?	**Schools should move strenuous practices indoors or postpone them, according to local conditions.**
4	How does paragraph 3 explain that vague claims weaken a public notice's authority?	**Vague claims leave readers uncertain about the evidence or the recommended response.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

At 3:00 p.m., the local Air Quality Index is 165, which is classified as Unhealthy. Because particle pollution is elevated, junior varsity soccer practice will move to the gymnasium today. Coaches should reduce strenuous activity and monitor students who report coughing or breathing difficulty. Families may check updated conditions through the local air-quality agency. This adjustment applies only to today's practice and will be reviewed later this afternoon if monitoring data change.

Accept equivalent responses that accurately identify precise language, evidence-based guidance, and specific actions from the passage. For the notice, accept responses that use the AQI appropriately, name an action, cite monitoring or an agency, and sustain a formal, restrained tone.