More Than a Bench

Analyze how an editorial builds a case for a public change.

11.T.T.3.a "Read, discuss, evaluate, and critique a variety of texts, considering the argumentative techniques used to present and design content and their associated implications on meaning or central idea. (I)"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the writer's main claim and each detail used as evidence, circle the rhetorical question, and write 1 beside the counterclaim. Use your marks to evaluate how the editorial guides readers toward its proposal.

Editorial: Roofs at Route 6 Stops

1 At 3:25 on a cloudless May afternoon, students at Lincoln High waited beside the downtown library for Route 6. The stop has a sign, a narrow bench, and no roof. One student held a notebook over her head; another stood across the street beneath a shop awning until the bus appeared. The city should add shade structures to its busiest bus stops before next summer. A simple roof would not erase hot weather, but it would give riders a more usable place to wait and show that public transit serves people, not just vehicles.

2 Last spring, a student environmental club observed four downtown stops for ten school-day afternoons. At the library stop, members recorded 41 riders waiting between 3:15 and 4:00, and 29 of them sought shade under trees, storefronts, or their own bags. The count focuses on one busy hour, when riders are outside before they board. The observation gives a close view of conditions at that stop. City transportation funds already pay for signs, benches, and route maps. If a stop needs a bench for waiting, why should a roof be treated as an extra?

3 Critics may say that shade structures would cost money and require maintenance. Those concerns deserve public estimates, especially because a poorly placed roof could block a sidewalk or hide a route map. Still, the city can begin with three high-use stops near the library, clinic, and community college, then publish rider feedback and repair costs after one year. This limited pilot offers a test rather than a blank check. When leaders compare the results with the cost of doing nothing, they can decide whether more roofs belong in the next transit budget.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What is the editorial's central claim?

2. What conclusion about riders does the detail that 29 of 41 riders sought shade invite readers to draw?

3. How does placing the rhetorical question after the sentence about signs, benches, and route maps shape the writer's argument?

4. Identify one strength and one limitation of the student club's observation as evidence for a citywide plan.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 90 to 120 word mini editorial proposing one improvement to a shared school or community space. Include a clear claim, a specific observation you have made, a rhetorical question, one concern about the proposal, and a limited pilot or test.

ANSWER KEY

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GRADE 11 · 11.T.T.3.a

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the writer's main claim and each detail used as evidence, circle the rhetorical question, and write 1 beside the counterclaim. Use your marks to evaluate how the editorial guides readers toward its proposal. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What is the editorial's central claim?	**The city should add shade structures to its busiest bus stops before next summer.**
2	What conclusion about riders does the detail that 29 of 41 riders sought shade invite readers to draw?	**It suggests that many riders want or need shade while waiting, supporting the case for roofs at stops.**
3	How does placing the rhetorical question after the sentence about signs, benches, and route maps shape the writer's argument?	**It encourages readers to view a roof as a basic transit amenity, like a bench or route map, rather than an unnecessary extra.**
4	Identify one strength and one limitation of the student club's observation as evidence for a citywide plan.	**A strength is that it records actual rider behavior during a busy waiting period. A limitation is that it covers only four stops and ten school-day afternoons, so it may not represent all stops, times, or seasons.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Our school should add a covered table near the athletic fields. During three lunch periods in April, I saw students eat on the grass while the only nearby tables sat in direct sun. A covered table would give teams, families, and students a place to meet before afternoon events. Why should people have to choose between standing in the heat and leaving the area? The project would require money and regular cleaning, so the school could install one table for a semester and collect user comments and maintenance records before adding more.

Accept reasonable interpretations that connect a technique to its likely effect on the editorial's central claim. For the open response, look for all required argumentative elements and a pilot that responds logically to the stated concern.