Words Move Votes

Analyze how an editorial's language appeals to readers and decision makers.

12.P.AC.1.b "Identify, apply, and analyze important, interesting, or effective uses of language, explaining or evaluating how specific word choices affect the target audience and support the text's purpose. (I/C)"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline four words or phrases chosen to persuade, then write C, R, or B beside each to show whether it seems aimed at council members, riders and workers, or both.

A Letter for Night Riders

1 At 11:20 p.m., the last Route 6 bus pulls away from the hospital district. Nurses ending twelve-hour shifts, kitchen workers carrying tired feet, and students leaving evening labs are left to piece together rides home. A city that praises essential workers should not strand them after dark. Extending service until 1:00 a.m. would not be a luxury line for a few riders. It would be a dependable bridge between workplaces, classrooms, and neighborhoods. The proposed hours answer a plain question: Can people who keep the city running also get home safely?

2 Some opponents call later buses an expense, as if the only number worth counting appears in a budget column. But the current schedule shifts costs onto riders, who may pay for late taxis, wait in unsafe weather, or turn down jobs with closing shifts. The transit agency estimates that the extension would cost $420,000 each year. That figure deserves scrutiny. It should also be weighed against missed wages, emergency rides, and the quiet message sent when public service ends before many workers do. Responsible budgeting is not choosing the cheapest line on a spreadsheet. It is accounting for who carries the burden when the line ends.

3 Council members will decide whether the proposal moves forward, yet their vote will reach far beyond the chamber. Employers can fill late shifts more reliably. Families can spend less time arranging emergency pickups. Riders can leave work with a timetable instead of a gamble. The extension will not solve every transportation problem, and its success should be measured publicly through ridership and on-time data. Still, a pilot route offers the city a practical test of its stated values. If leaders say opportunity belongs to every neighborhood, the final bus should not leave before opportunity does.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does the phrase “dependable bridge” shape the reader’s view of the proposed bus extension? Explain how that wording supports the writer’s purpose.

2. The writer says the current schedule “shifts costs onto riders.” What idea does the word “shifts” communicate, and how might it affect council members?

3. Why does the writer include the exact annual cost of $420,000 and then say that the figure “deserves scrutiny”?

4. Analyze the final sentence’s repetition of “opportunity.” How does this word choice connect to the likely audience and the writer’s purpose?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a three-sentence appeal to a decision-making audience about one school or community issue. Include one verifiable detail and at least three deliberate word choices, then underline those choices and add a brief margin note explaining how each choice aims to influence your audience and support your purpose.

ANSWER KEY

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GRADE 12 · 12.P.AC.1.b

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline four words or phrases chosen to persuade, then write C, R, or B beside each to show whether it seems aimed at council members, riders and workers, or both. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does the phrase "dependable bridge" shape the reader's view of the proposed bus extension? Explain how that wording supports the writer's purpose.	**It presents the buses as an essential connection among jobs, school, and home, not as an optional luxury. This supports the purpose of persuading readers to approve later service.**
2	The writer says the current schedule "shifts costs onto riders." What idea does the word "shifts" communicate, and how might it affect council members?	**"Shifts" suggests that the city transfers a financial burden to riders instead of eliminating it. It may lead council members to see the existing schedule as unfair, not simply inexpensive.**
3	Why does the writer include the exact annual cost of $420,000 and then say that the figure "deserves scrutiny"?	**The precise figure and qualification acknowledge budget concerns and make the argument sound measured and credible. This can appeal to council members who must evaluate public spending.**
4	Analyze the final sentence's repetition of "opportunity." How does this word choice connect to the likely audience and the writer's purpose?	**The repetition links the bus schedule to leaders' public claim that opportunity should reach every neighborhood. It pressures council members to make their transportation decision match that value.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Appeal: Members of Congress, the federal minimum wage has remained $7.25 per hour since 2009. A wage [frozen] for seventeen years does not protect [full-time] workers from rising costs. Raise the wage to give work the [dignified] return it deserves. Notes: frozen, suggests harmful inaction. full-time, emphasizes workers' commitment. dignified, appeals to lawmakers' sense of fairness and respect.

Accept varied markings and responses when students identify specific language and reasonably explain its effect on riders, workers, council members, or both. For the open task, accept any accurate verifiable detail and analysis that clearly connects each selected word choice to an audience and persuasive purpose.