Syntax With Stakes

Notice how sentence choices turn a public comment into a persuasive request.

12.P.AC.2.c "Make decisions about sentence structure and syntax in order to accommodate and influence the audience and achieve a specific purpose. (I/C)"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline sentences that directly ask the council to act, circle short sentences, and box sentences that begin with a dependent clause. In the margin, label each marked choice with its likely effect on the council: action, urgency, or reasoning.

Public Comment on Shade Access

1 Councilmembers, the map on the screen is not merely a planning document. It shows where summer heat settles, block after block, over bus stops, playgrounds, and apartment roofs with little shade. In the eastern neighborhoods, residents walk farther from trees and wait longer for buses, often beside wide roads that hold heat after sunset. I ask you to fund shade structures at transit stops and to require canopy targets in major redevelopment projects. This is a practical public-health decision, not an aesthetic extra. A cooler route can change whether an older adult reaches a clinic safely.

2 The evidence behind this request is straightforward, and it deserves a response with equal specificity. Unshaded pavement absorbs solar energy and can become much hotter than nearby shaded ground on sunny days. That difference matters because heat exposure is not distributed by accident. When a neighborhood has fewer trees, fewer covered stops, and less access to air-conditioned public spaces, its residents carry more of the risk. Fund the pilot before next summer, then publish the locations, costs, and temperature results. Residents should be able to see whether the city's promise reaches the blocks identified on its own map.

3 Some may say that trees take too long to grow, or that a shade requirement would slow construction. Those concerns deserve consideration. Yet the proposal does not depend on mature trees alone: it combines long-term canopy goals with covered transit stops that can be installed sooner. Approve a one-year pilot in the hottest transit corridors. Measure conditions before and after installation. Report the results publicly. If the council wants a city that plans for residents rather than averages, it must treat shade as essential infrastructure. The choice before you is limited, concrete, and urgent.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why does the writer begin by addressing "Councilmembers" instead of beginning with the heat problem? Explain how this choice fits the audience and purpose.

2. How does the sentence beginning "When a neighborhood has fewer trees" build the writer's reasoning?

3. What effect do the three consecutive short commands in paragraph 3 have on the council as an audience?

4. How does the final sentence, with the parallel words "limited, concrete, and urgent," support the writer's purpose?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 90 to 120-word public comment to a school board advocating one change that would improve student access to learning. Address the board directly, include one sentence of five words or fewer, begin one complex sentence with Although, When, or Because, and include at least one direct request.

ANSWER KEY

Syntax With Stakes

GRADE 12 · 12.P.AC.2.c

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline sentences that directly ask the council to act, circle short sentences, and box sentences that begin with a dependent clause. In the margin, label each marked choice with its likely effect on the council: action, urgency, or reasoning. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why does the writer begin by addressing "Councilmembers" instead of beginning with the heat problem? Explain how this choice fits the audience and purpose.	**The direct address identifies the city council as the audience and makes the comment sound like a formal, focused request for council action.**
2	How does the sentence beginning "When a neighborhood has fewer trees" build the writer's reasoning?	**Its dependent clause presents conditions, and its main clause states the consequence, connecting unequal neighborhood resources to greater heat risk.**
3	What effect do the three consecutive short commands in paragraph 3 have on the council as an audience?	**They turn the proposal into clear, immediate steps: approve the pilot, measure conditions, and report results publicly.**
4	How does the final sentence, with the parallel words "limited, concrete, and urgent," support the writer's purpose?	**The parallel descriptions make the decision seem manageable, specific, and time-sensitive, encouraging the council to act.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Board members, students who share crowded homes need a reliable place to read, research, and meet with tutors after classes end. Although the library already serves many students during the day, its current closing time excludes athletes, students with jobs, and those who ride late buses. Keep the library open two additional hours, four evenings each week. Start with a semester-long pilot. Track attendance, tutoring use, and transportation needs, then publish the results. This is not a luxury. It is a practical way to give students time, quiet, and support when they need them most.

Accept answers that identify a specific structural choice and explain its effect on the council audience or persuasive purpose. For the open response, accept varied topics if the response meets the word count and required syntax choices while clearly addressing a school board.