Designing the Message

Analyze how a public-service message reaches its readers.

12.P.AC.3.a "Explore and create texts in various modes and genres, developing and applying knowledge of how specific features impact meaning, tone, style, purpose, and audience. (I/C)"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two details that establish the problem, circle two features aimed directly at students, and write 1 beside a sentence that uses numerical evidence so you can track how design choices shape purpose and audience.

A Lunch Waste Proposal

1 By 12:40 on Friday, the cafeteria's compost bucket was full, but the trash bins were fuller. I watched unopened yogurt cups, whole apples, and plastic forks slide from lunch trays into the same black bags. The scene is easy to ignore because the bell rings and everyone hurries to class. Yet food buried in landfills produces methane, a heat-trapping gas. Our school cannot solve climate change alone, but it can stop treating every leftover bite and container as invisible. This is a problem students can see, measure, and change before the next lunch period.

2 Numbers make the waste less abstract. During a five-day student council audit in April, volunteers recorded 312 unopened packaged items in cafeteria trash, along with 146 whole fruits. Those counts do not prove why students discard food, but they show that the loss is larger than a few forgotten carrots. "We plan meals in minutes," said senior Maya Ortiz, who helped conduct the audit. "A visible share table would give unopened food a second chance." Her measured claim, rather than a blame-filled accusation, invites readers to consider a practical response.

3 Start with one small choice on Tuesday: place an unopened item on the share table, or choose a smaller portion if you are unsure you will finish. Then tell a friend why. The proposal is not a demand that students clean every plate, nor is it a promise that one table will erase waste. It is an invitation to make a routine more thoughtful. Look for the bright green bin beside the cafeteria windows, and add your name to the student council's lunch-waste team. Less waste begins with what we notice, and with what we decide not to throw away.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Who is the most likely audience for this message? Use two details from the passage to support your answer.

2. How do the numbers in paragraph 2 affect the meaning and credibility of the message?

3. Why does the writer state that the audit counts "do not prove why students discard food"?

4. How do the commands and direct address in paragraph 3 support the writer's purpose?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 75-95-word announcement for teens about a different school or community issue. Include a headline, a concrete observed detail, one specific fact or number from a source you name, a sentence that addresses readers directly, and a clear action, while keeping a constructive, practical tone.

ANSWER KEY

Designing the Message

GRADE 12 · 12.P.AC.3.a

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two details that establish the problem, circle two features aimed directly at students, and write 1 beside a sentence that uses numerical evidence so you can track how design choices shape purpose and audience. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Who is the most likely audience for this message? Use two details from the passage to support your answer.	**Students who eat in the school cafeteria. Details may include the bell, lunch trays, the cafeteria, and the invitation to join the student council's lunch-waste team.**
2	How do the numbers in paragraph 2 affect the meaning and credibility of the message?	**They make the amount of waste concrete and show that the issue is larger than a few isolated items, which supports the writer's claim with evidence.**
3	Why does the writer state that the audit counts "do not prove why students discard food"?	**The qualification shows careful reasoning. It prevents an unsupported claim about students' motives and creates a measured, credible tone.**
4	How do the commands and direct address in paragraph 3 support the writer's purpose?	**Commands such as "Start," "tell," "Look," and "add your name" address students directly and turn the message into a practical call to action.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

LIGHTS OUT, LABS ON Yesterday, the science wing glowed through sixth period even after two classes moved to the auditorium. You can help cut that waste in ten seconds: switch off lights when the last person leaves. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, LED bulbs use at least 75 percent less energy than incandescent bulbs, but they still waste electricity in empty rooms. Sign the door checklist and volunteer as your class's energy monitor this week. Your small habit can make the hallway match the school's conservation goals.

For the marking task, accept any two problem details, direct-address features such as "you" or imperatives, and one sentence containing numerical evidence. For the open response, accept varied issues if the required genre features and a constructive, practical tone are clear.