

Purpose Under Pressure

Analyze how a public comment targets its decision-making audience.

12.P.ST.2.a "Develop and apply knowledge of author, audience, and context to discern and establish the purpose of texts being interpreted or constructed and to evaluate the extent to which those texts achieve those purposes. (I/C)"

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Circle clues that reveal the audience and situation, underline the writer's main request, and number three details the writer uses to persuade the board.

Keep Sunday Hours

- ① Members of the Riverton Public Library Board, I am writing before your April budget vote to ask that the library remain open on Sundays from noon to five. As a senior at Riverton High, I use its quiet tables and reliable internet, but this request is not only about students. Last Sunday, I saw a nursing student preparing for an exam, a parent printing job applications, and two children choosing books with their grandfather. Closing the building on Sundays would remove a shared workspace when many residents are off work and school.
- ② The board's own 2024 community survey reported that weekend access was among residents' most requested services. Keeping five Sunday hours would not require a new building or a new program, only a schedule that matches documented need. The library already provides computer access, research databases, and staff assistance during those hours. Those services matter especially to people who cannot study, search for work, or meet with a librarian during a weekday. I recognize that staffing has a cost, yet the board can compare that cost with the value of serving more residents.
- ③ Some may argue that online resources make a physical building less necessary. However, a website cannot offer a quiet desk to a crowded household, help a visitor navigate a database, or give children a place to read together. I ask the board to preserve Sunday hours in the upcoming budget and to publish its decision with the staffing estimate. That step would let residents see both the expense and the public benefit. A library schedule is a statement about who can use civic resources, and Sunday access says that opportunity should not depend on a weekday schedule.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE Use the passage

1 Who is the writer, who is the intended audience, and what situation prompted this public comment?

2 Identify two choices the writer makes to address the library board as an audience responsible for a budget decision.

3 What is the writer's primary purpose? State the requested action precisely.

4 To what extent does the comment achieve its purpose? Use two passage details and identify one limitation.

3 YOUR TURN Your own words

Draft a 100-130-word public comment to a school board about one change to the school day or campus that you want it to make. Then write two sentences that name your audience and purpose and explain how two choices in your comment help achieve that purpose.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Circle clues that reveal the audience and situation, underline the writer's main request, and number three details the writer uses to persuade the board. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Who is the writer, who is the intended audience, and what situation prompted this public comment?	The writer is a Riverton High senior. The audience is the Riverton Public Library Board, which is preparing for an April budget vote that could affect Sunday library hours.
2	Identify two choices the writer makes to address the library board as an audience responsible for a budget decision.	The writer cites the board's 2024 community survey and acknowledges staffing costs. The writer also asks for a staffing estimate, addressing the board's responsibility to weigh costs and benefits.
3	What is the writer's primary purpose? State the requested action precisely.	The writer aims to persuade the board to keep the library open on Sundays from noon to five in the upcoming budget and to publish its decision with a staffing estimate.
4	To what extent does the comment achieve its purpose? Use two passage details and identify one limitation.	It substantially supports its purpose by showing several kinds of Sunday users and citing the board's survey about weekend access. It also addresses a counterargument about online resources, but it does not provide actual staffing-cost figures or a specific funding plan.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Board members, before you approve next year's transportation plan, add a covered bus shelter beside the east entrance. Students who ride Route 6 now wait in rain and intense afternoon sun, often while carrying instruments, sports equipment, or laptops. The current bench seats only six people, although several buses unload at the same time. A shelter with lighting would give students a safer, more orderly place to wait and would help drivers see the pickup area after dark. This improvement is limited in scope, but it would protect hundreds of daily riders. Please include it in the transportation plan and publish a timeline for installation. My audience is the school board, and my purpose is to persuade it to fund the shelter during transportation planning. I use concrete conditions, such as rain and a six-seat bench, plus a feasible request for a published timeline to show need and accountability.

Accept reasonable evaluations that identify the writer's audience, context, purpose, and relevant textual evidence. For the open response, look for a clear audience-aware purpose, purposeful rhetorical choices, and an explanation of how those choices support the purpose.