Words That Move

Analyze how a public comment shapes a city council's decision.

12.T.SS.2.b "Use literary devices, figurative language, rhetorical language, and/or rhetorical appeals to create a variety of effects, as appropriate to intended purpose and target audience. (C)"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline every use of figurative or rhetorical language, circle the evidence-based appeal, and write in the margin whether each marked choice builds logic, emotion, or urgency.

Keep the Lights On

1 Members of the Riverton City Council, the Maple Street Library is more than a building with shelves. It is the town's common table, a place where a job seeker can polish a résumé beside a child choosing a first novel. According to the library's annual report, 1,840 residents used its computers last year, and 612 people attended free workshops. Those numbers matter because internet access and guided learning should not depend on a household's income. When the proposed budget reduces evening hours, it closes a door precisely when many workers and students can reach it.

2 Picture a senior finishing an online benefits form at 7:45 p.m., or a teenager waiting for a quiet desk after a crowded shift at home. For them, the library's lights are a lighthouse, not a luxury. What message do we send when the only free study space goes dark before dinner? The council has a duty to weigh costs, yet it also has a duty to weigh consequences. A small saving on paper can become a large loss in opportunity, connection, and trust. Keep the branch open until 9:00 p.m. on weekdays.

3 Council members, you can choose a budget that merely balances, or you can choose a city that opens. Fund the evening hours. Fund the tutoring tables. Fund the computers that carry applications, research, and family messages across the screen. This request is not a plea for an ornament. It is an investment in neighbors who are studying, applying, recovering, and beginning again. Approve the library's evening schedule, and Riverton will say, through action rather than slogan, that every resident deserves a place to learn after the workday ends.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What figurative comparison does the speaker make about the library's lights, and what feeling does it create?

2. How do the figures from the annual report function as a logical appeal?

3. Quote the rhetorical question in paragraph 2. How does it pressure the council to reconsider reduced hours?

4. How does the repeated phrase "Fund the" affect the final paragraph, and why does it fit the speaker's purpose?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 90-110-word public comment to a school board asking it to keep a study hall open until 6:00 p.m. on weekdays. Use the fact that a student survey found 68 percent of respondents need a quiet place to work after classes, and include one rhetorical question and one figurative comparison.

ANSWER KEY

Words That Move

GRADE 12 · 12.T.SS.2.b

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline every use of figurative or rhetorical language, circle the evidence-based appeal, and write in the margin whether each marked choice builds logic, emotion, or urgency. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What figurative comparison does the speaker make about the library's lights, and what feeling does it create?	**The speaker calls the lights "a lighthouse," creating a feeling of guidance, safety, and hope for people who need the library.**
2	How do the figures from the annual report function as a logical appeal?	**The figures show that many residents use library computers and workshops, providing evidence that the library serves a real community need.**
3	Quote the rhetorical question in paragraph 2. How does it pressure the council to reconsider reduced hours?	**"What message do we send when the only free study space goes dark before dinner?" It makes the council consider the harmful message and consequences of closing early.**
4	How does the repeated phrase "Fund the" affect the final paragraph, and why does it fit the speaker's purpose?	**The repetition creates urgency and emphasizes specific services. It fits the purpose because the speaker wants the council to approve funding.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

School Board members, keep the study hall open until 6:00 p.m. Our student survey found that 68 percent of respondents need a quiet place to work after classes, a clear sign that the current closing time leaves many students behind. The study hall is a bridge between a demanding school day and a successful tomorrow. Where should students complete research or get help when buses, jobs, and crowded homes limit their choices? Extend the hours, and you will give students time, space, and support when they need it most during the week.

Accept equivalent explanations that accurately connect a device or appeal to its effect on the city council audience. For the open response, verify the word count, intended audience and request, survey fact, rhetorical question, figurative comparison, and a persuasive effect.