Words That Move

Analyze rhetorical choices in a civic appeal.

12.T.SS.2 "Craft: Analyze, evaluate, and craft language to produce intended effects in a wide variety of texts."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two phrases that create a concrete image, circle one concession, and number the two shortest sentences. In the margin, name the intended effect of each kind of choice.

A Park for Rain

1 Members of the Riverton Council, the vacant Calder lot is not empty. After heavy rain, it becomes a shallow, muddy lake beside apartment buildings, and children watch it spread from their windows. We can leave that water to threaten basements, or we can shape the lot into a floodable public park. Picture rain gardens that hold runoff, paths shaded by young trees, and a pond where science classes can study insects. This proposal is a basin, a classroom, and a commons. It protects nearby homes, gives students a living laboratory, and creates a place where neighbors can meet without paying admission.

2 I will not claim that a park erases every flood. Construction would close part of the block for a season, and the city must maintain the gardens after the ribbon cutting. Those costs deserve a public plan. Yet doing nothing also has a price: repeated cleanup, damaged property, and anxious nights when forecasts darken. Water is coming. Give it somewhere safe to go. A grant could cover much of the initial work, but this decision is larger than a grant. It asks whether we will prepare together or wait separately for the next emergency.

3 Some will see a fenced lot and call it the cheaper choice. I see a scar at the center of the neighborhood, collecting bottles, weeds, and runoff. Some will see a park and call it an expense. I see cooler sidewalks, safer basements, and students kneeling beside a pond with sample jars. The choice is not between beauty and necessity; it is between a neglected problem and a useful solution. Let the next storm fill roots and soil, not living rooms. Let children see rain feed a park, not invade a home.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does the image of a muddy lake beside apartment buildings shape the audience's view of the problem?

2. What effect does the phrase “a basin, a classroom, and a commons” create?

3. How do the short sentences “Water is coming. Give it somewhere safe to go.” affect the tone of the appeal?

4. How does the repeated “Some will see . . . I see . . .” structure strengthen the final paragraph?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 90-120-word public comment to a town council that urges protected bike lanes near a high school. Include a concrete image, a fair concession, two consecutive short sentences, and a final sentence that contrasts two possible choices.

ANSWER KEY

Words That Move

GRADE 12 · 12.T.SS.2

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two phrases that create a concrete image, circle one concession, and number the two shortest sentences. In the margin, name the intended effect of each kind of choice. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does the image of a muddy lake beside apartment buildings shape the audience's view of the problem?	**It makes flooding visible and personal, emphasizing its threat to nearby residents and homes.**
2	What effect does the phrase "a basin, a classroom, and a commons" create?	**It presents the park as serving several purposes: flood protection, education, and community use.**
3	How do the short sentences "Water is coming. Give it somewhere safe to go." affect the tone of the appeal?	**They create urgency and push the audience toward immediate, practical action.**
4	How does the repeated "Some will see . . . I see . . ." structure strengthen the final paragraph?	**It acknowledges opposing views, then reframes the park as a useful solution with concrete benefits.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Members of the town council, consider the bicycle racks outside Lincoln High at 7:40 each morning: helmets drip after rain, and students squeeze between buses and turning cars. Protected bike lanes would not eliminate every traffic risk, and building them would require money and temporary lane closures. Still, the present route asks teenagers to gamble with a commute. Streets can change. Habits can change. A separated lane would give families a safer option, ease congestion at the entrance, and show that the town plans for students who do not arrive by car. We can preserve a fast drop-off line, or we can build a safer path to school.

Accept answers that accurately connect a language choice to its effect on the council audience. Open responses may vary in position and wording, but they must meet the word range and include all four required rhetorical features.