Words With Weight

Word choices shape tone and influence readers.

6.L.V.3 "Meaning & Purpose: Analyze the denotative and connotative meanings of words and phrases and strategically apply those understandings when interpreting and constructing texts."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline words or phrases that make the garden plan sound positive. Circle words or phrases that make the plan sound less appealing, then number each pair that describes the same idea in different ways.

A Garden Proposal

1. On Monday, the student council presented a plan for a courtyard garden at Brookside Middle School. Their flyer called the empty space "a forgotten patch of concrete" and described the proposed garden as "a living classroom." The plan included raised beds, a rain barrel, and benches. Council members hoped the garden would give science classes a place to observe insects and plants. They also wanted students to have a calm spot during lunch. The flyer's words made the project sound both useful and inviting.

2. Not everyone agreed with the flyer. In the school newspaper, a writer called the same space "plain" rather than "forgotten" and called the garden "an expensive project" instead of a living classroom. The article asked readers to consider the cost of lumber, soil, and tools. It also noted that volunteers would need to water the beds during school breaks. The writer did not oppose outdoor learning, but the article focused on possible problems before praising the plan for students and families.

3. At the public meeting, Maya spoke in favor of the plan. She said, "This garden is not just decoration. It is a small investment that can grow into years of learning." Maya pointed to a sketch showing benches beside the raised beds. She explained that classes could record plant growth, and students could sit outside during lunch. Maya did not claim that the garden would solve every problem. Instead, she asked the adults to picture students using the space over time and to approve a trial garden.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. The words plain and forgotten both describe the courtyard. How are their connotations different, and which word would make readers feel more concerned about the space?

2. What does the phrase "a living classroom" suggest about the garden? Explain how this phrase supports the student council's purpose.

3. Why might the newspaper writer call the garden "an expensive project" instead of using the phrase "a living classroom"?

4. What does Maya mean by calling the garden "a small investment that can grow into years of learning"? How does this wording help persuade adults?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write exactly two sentences inviting students to a school book swap. Underline two words with positive connotations that make the event appealing, and circle one neutral phrase that gives a factual detail.

ANSWER KEY

Words With Weight

GRADE 6 · 6.L.V.3

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline words or phrases that make the garden plan sound positive. Circle words or phrases that make the plan sound less appealing, then number each pair that describes the same idea in different ways. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	The words plain and forgotten both describe the courtyard. How are their connotations different, and which word would make readers feel more concerned about the space?	**Plain sounds neutral, meaning simple or not decorated. Forgotten suggests the space has been ignored or neglected, so it creates more concern.**
2	What does the phrase “a living classroom” suggest about the garden? Explain how this phrase supports the student council’s purpose.	**It suggests that students could learn by observing living plants and insects. It supports the council’s purpose by making the garden seem useful for education.**
3	Why might the newspaper writer call the garden “an expensive project” instead of using the phrase “a living classroom”?	**Expensive project focuses readers on costs and possible problems, which may make them question whether the school should approve the plan.**
4	What does Maya mean by calling the garden “a small investment that can grow into years of learning”? How does this wording help persuade adults?	**Maya means that a limited cost now could bring learning benefits for a long time. The wording presents the garden as a valuable, practical choice.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Join our _welcoming_ book swap and discover _treasured_ stories. Bring a book to the library (at 3:15).

Accept reasonable explanations of both literal meaning and the feelings or ideas connected to each word choice. For Part 3, accept any two-sentence invitation with two positively connotative words and one neutral factual detail marked as directed.