Words That Persuade

Notice how a letter uses evidence and rhetoric to influence a public decision.

6.P.AC.1.a "Identify, apply, and analyze the literary, expository, and opinion (grades K-5) or rhetorical (grades 6-12) elements in texts, explaining or evaluating how specific elements affect the target audience and support the text's purpose. (I/C)"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two facts or examples that support the writer's claim. Circle one direct address or question aimed at the council, then write a short note in the margin about how it could influence the audience.

Keep the Library Garden

1 Dear Riverbend City Council, please protect the wildflower strip beside the library instead of turning it into extra parking. This small space is not empty land. It is a busy stop for bees, butterflies, and other pollinators. Pollinators move pollen between flowers, helping many plants make seeds and fruit. When I walked past the strip last Saturday, I counted six kinds of butterflies in ten minutes. A few painted lines cannot replace a living habitat that serves our whole town.

2 Protecting the strip also makes practical sense. Native plants usually need less watering after they are established than thirsty lawn grass, and their roots can help hold soil in place during heavy rain. The library garden already has labeled signs, so families can learn which insects visit each flower. Would our city rather spend money repainting parking spaces every year, or keep a place where children can watch a caterpillar become a butterfly? The answer affects more than one block.

3 Council members, you can choose a solution that welcomes drivers without erasing the garden. Mark two nearby spaces for short library visits, improve the bike rack, and leave the wildflower strip in place. These steps show that Riverbend values access and nature. Imagine a child checking the garden on the way to borrow a book, then returning home with a question worth researching. Please vote to protect the strip at Tuesday's meeting. Your decision can keep this tiny classroom alive for years.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Who is the target audience of this letter, and what does the writer want that audience to do?

2. Choose one fact from paragraph 1 or 2. Explain how that fact supports the writer's purpose.

3. How does the rhetorical question in paragraph 2 affect council members? Explain how it supports the writer's purpose.

4. What picture does the writer create with the child visiting the garden before borrowing a book? How might this picture influence the audience?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a three-sentence message to the City Council that supports protecting the wildflower strip. Include one fact from the passage, one rhetorical choice that addresses or questions the audience, and a clear call to action.

Words That Persuade

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two facts or examples that support the writer's claim. Circle one direct address or question aimed at the council, then write a short note in the margin about how it could influence the audience. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Who is the target audience of this letter, and what does the writer want that audience to do?	**The target audience is the Riverbend City Council. The writer wants council members to vote to protect the wildflower strip.**
2	Choose one fact from paragraph 1 or 2. Explain how that fact supports the writer's purpose.	**For example, the fact that native plants usually need less watering after they are established shows that keeping the garden is a practical choice.**
3	How does the rhetorical question in paragraph 2 affect council members? Explain how it supports the writer's purpose.	**It asks council members to compare repeated parking-space costs with the garden's value for children. This encourages them to see protecting the garden as the better choice.**
4	What picture does the writer create with the child visiting the garden before borrowing a book? How might this picture influence the audience?	**The writer creates an image of a child becoming curious and learning from nature. This may make council members value the garden as an educational space.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Council members, please protect the wildflower strip beside the library. Native plants usually need less watering after they are established than lawn grass, so the garden is a practical choice. Would Riverbend rather lose a place where children can observe insects than keep this living classroom?

Accept supported explanations that identify the City Council as the audience and protection of the garden as the purpose. In Part 3, check for exactly three sentences, accurate passage-based evidence, a rhetorical choice aimed at the council, and a clear request to protect the strip.