Syntax Signals Safety

Analyze how sentence choices shape a public safety message.

8.P.AC.1.c "Explain, analyze, and evaluate how the author's use of sentence structure and syntax affects the target audience and supports the text's purpose. (I/C)"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline sentences with five words or fewer, circle every question, and number each sentence that begins with If to see how these structures guide and reassure neighborhood residents.

A Notice for Our Block

1. On Thursday, the city will test the emergency sirens at 10:00 a.m. The sound may last three minutes. Do not call 911 unless you have an actual emergency. Instead, pause, listen, and notice where you can hear the tone. Can you hear it inside your home? From the sidewalk? Near the playground? At the bus stop? These details will help the city learn whether the sirens reach every part of the neighborhood before severe weather arrives.

2. A siren test is not a warning. It is practice. Still, practice matters when storms move quickly and phones lose power. If you supervise younger children, tell them what the sound means before Thursday. If you work from home, plan for the interruption. If you are outside, stay calm and check the city website after the test. One prepared neighbor can share accurate information. Many prepared neighbors can make a whole block safer during emergencies.

3. On Thursday, listen for the test, but do not panic. The city is checking equipment now so that it can send a clear signal later. That order matters: check first, warn later. You do not need to buy supplies or change your plans. You only need to recognize the tone and explain it to someone who might be confused. Three minutes. One signal. A stronger neighborhood response when a real warning is needed in the future.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does the short sentence “It is practice.” affect the audience after the sentence before it?

2. What is the effect of repeating the sentence opening “If you” in paragraph 2?

3. How do the questions and short location phrases in paragraph 1 support the purpose of the notice?

4. How do the short fragments “Three minutes. One signal.” affect residents, and how do they support the notice's purpose?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence notice for people at a library before an alarm test. Include one short sentence, one sentence that begins with If, and one question, then write two sentences explaining how your sentence structures help the audience and purpose.

ANSWER KEY

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GRADE 8 · 8.P.AC.1.c

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline sentences with five words or fewer, circle every question, and number each sentence that begins with If to see how these structures guide and reassure neighborhood residents. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does the short sentence "It is practice." affect the audience after the sentence before it?	**Its direct, brief structure clearly separates the test from a real warning, helping reassure residents.**
2	What is the effect of repeating the sentence opening "If you" in paragraph 2?	**The repeated opening gives clear directions to residents in different situations, making the notice feel inclusive and easy to follow.**
3	How do the questions and short location phrases in paragraph 1 support the purpose of the notice?	**They prompt residents to think about specific places where they might hear the siren, helping the city gather useful information from the test.**
4	How do the short fragments "Three minutes. One signal." affect residents, and how do they support the notice's purpose?	**The fragments make the key details memorable and calm, supporting the purpose of preparing residents without causing panic.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Tomorrow at 2:00 p.m., the library will test its fire alarm. It is only a test. If you are studying or using a computer, remain seated until a staff member gives directions. Can you help a younger visitor stay calm? The short sentence reassures library visitors, and the If sentence gives clear steps to people in different situations. The question invites visitors to look out for others, supporting the notice's purpose of preparing everyone for the test.

Accept answers that identify the effect of a specific sentence structure and connect that effect to residents and the notice's purpose. For the open task, accept varied notices if they include the required structures and a logical explanation of audience and purpose.