The Waiting Argument

Trace rhetorical choices in a local transportation editorial.

9.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 the sentence that gives the writer's main claim. Circle the rhetorical question, then number 1, 2, and 3 beside a piece of evidence, a concession, and a call to action to track how the writer persuades town decision makers.

Shelter Is Part of the Ride

(1) At 3:20 each afternoon, students at Riverton High wait beside a bare curb for buses. In September, the pavement can hold the day's heat, and there is nowhere to step out of the sun. Some students stand for thirty minutes after sports practice, carrying heavy instruments or backpacks. A town that requires young people to wait safely for transportation should provide a place where they can wait safely. Would we leave library patrons on an unshaded sidewalk, then call that service adequate? Bus riders deserve the same basic consideration.

(2) Last spring, the student council surveyed 214 riders who use the two busiest stops. Of those riders, 186 reported avoiding the stops after school when a family ride was available, mostly because heat, rain, or traffic made waiting uncomfortable. That survey is not a traffic study, but it records the experiences of the people the stops are meant to serve. A simple shelter with a roof, bench, and posted route map would not solve every transit problem. It would, however, make the daily wait more predictable and visible to drivers. Practical improvements show that public transportation includes the time before the bus arrives.

(3) Council members may worry that shelters cost money and require upkeep. Those concerns are real, so Riverton should begin with the two busiest stops and review the results after one school year. Local businesses, parent groups, and student volunteers could help keep the spaces clean, while the town manages safety and repairs. The choice is not between a perfect transit system and doing nothing. It is between leaving riders exposed today or giving them a modest protection now. At the next budget meeting, council members should fund two shelters and invite riders to report what changes.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Who is the writer's main target audience, and what does the writer want that audience to do?

2. How does the rhetorical question about library patrons affect the target audience?

3. How do the survey numbers in paragraph 2 support the writer's purpose?

4. How does the writer's acknowledgment of cost and upkeep strengthen the argument?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write exactly three sentences to your principal arguing for one improvement to the school day. Include one specific observation, one rhetorical question, and a concession followed by a response.

ANSWER KEY

The Waiting Argument

GRADE 9 · 9.P.AC.1.a

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the sentence that gives the writer's main claim. Circle the rhetorical question, then number 1, 2, and 3 beside a piece of evidence, a concession, and a call to action to track how the writer persuades town decision makers. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Who is the writer's main target audience, and what does the writer want that audience to do?	**The main audience is Riverton's council members. The writer wants them to fund two bus shelters at the busiest stops.**
2	How does the rhetorical question about library patrons affect the target audience?	**It compares bus riders to library patrons and pushes council members to see unshaded bus stops as unfair and inadequate public service.**
3	How do the survey numbers in paragraph 2 support the writer's purpose?	**The numbers show that many riders avoid the stops when possible, giving concrete evidence that waiting conditions are a real problem.**
4	How does the writer's acknowledgment of cost and upkeep strengthen the argument?	**It shows the writer recognizes a reasonable concern, then offers a limited, practical plan to begin with two shelters and review the results.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Principal Alvarez, the cafeteria has only six recycling bins, so students often toss bottles into trash cans during crowded lunches. Although adding bins would cost money, a small pilot near the exits could show whether less waste reaches the landfill. If students are expected to care for our campus, should they have to search the room for a place to recycle?

Accept responses that accurately connect a rhetorical choice to its likely effect on council members and the purpose of gaining support for shelters. For Part 3, accept any school-focused argument with exactly three sentences, a concrete observation, a rhetorical question, and a concession followed by a response.