Words That Move

Study how a public letter aims at a decision-making audience.

9.P.AC.1.b "Identify, apply, and analyze important, interesting, or effective uses of language, explaining or evaluating how specific word choices affect the target audience and support the text's purpose. (I/C)"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline three word choices or phrases that make the proposal sound urgent, practical, or worthwhile. In the margin, number each choice and write U, P, or W to show the impression it creates for city council members.

A Letter About Maple Lot

1 Dear Riverton City Council, The fenced lot beside Maple Street Library has stood bare for years. In July, its dark pavement throws heat toward the bus stop, where riders wait without shade. After rain, water gathers along the broken curb and leaves a muddy path to the library entrance. This small corner is not empty to the families who pass it each day. It is a hard, neglected welcome to one of our busiest public buildings. Our Youth Green Team asks the council to turn the lot into a pocket park.

2 We propose six shade trees, native grasses, benches, and a short paved path from the bus stop to the library door. Native plants can support local insects, and tree roots can help rainwater soak into soil instead of racing across pavement. The design uses a modest piece of land already owned by the city. Rather than adding another costly patchwork repair to the curb, Riverton could create a place that serves walkers, riders, readers, and nearby shop employees. A pocket park would give the block a calmer, cooler face.

3 We know the council must weigh budgets and maintenance before approving any project. For that reason, we have attached a simple plan and a list of volunteers ready to help with planting days. The park will not solve every problem on Maple Street. It will, however, replace a locked stretch of pavement with a shared space that invites people to pause, meet, and enter the library safely. Please place the pocket park on the October agenda. A decision this fall would let the city prepare the ground before next summer's heat settles over the bus stop again.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. The writer calls the lot a “hard, neglected welcome.” What impression does this phrase create, and why might that impression matter to city council members?

2. Why is “costly patchwork repair” a stronger choice than simply calling the curb work a repair? Explain how the phrase supports the writer's purpose.

3. How does the list “walkers, riders, readers, and nearby shop employees” help the writer appeal to the council?

4. What effect does the final reference to “next summer's heat” have on the letter's request for an October agenda spot?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a three-sentence message to your school board proposing a water-bottle filling station near the gym. Use at least two deliberate words or phrases to make the project seem useful or urgent, then write one sentence naming those choices and explaining how they might influence board members.

ANSWER KEY

Words That Move

GRADE 9 · 9.P.AC.1.b

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline three word choices or phrases that make the proposal sound urgent, practical, or worthwhile. In the margin, number each choice and write U, P, or W to show the impression it creates for city council members. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	The writer calls the lot a “hard, neglected welcome.” What impression does this phrase create, and why might that impression matter to city council members?	**It presents the lot as unattractive and poorly cared for, making the council see a need to improve the area near a busy public building.**
2	Why is “costly patchwork repair” a stronger choice than simply calling the curb work a repair? Explain how the phrase supports the writer's purpose.	**The phrase suggests the repairs are expensive, temporary, and pieced together. It supports the proposal by making the park seem like a better use of city resources.**
3	How does the list “walkers, riders, readers, and nearby shop employees” help the writer appeal to the council?	**The list shows that several groups would use the park, so the project appears to benefit a broad part of the community.**
4	What effect does the final reference to “next summer's heat” have on the letter's request for an October agenda spot?	**It creates a time pressure by showing that planning must begin in fall if the city wants the park ready before another hot summer.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Dear School Board, a filling station near the gym would replace the slow, crowded fountain that students use after practice. This practical upgrade would let athletes and visitors refill bottles without crossing the building. Please include the station in next year's facilities plan. The phrases “slow, crowded fountain” and “practical upgrade” present a problem and a manageable solution, which may persuade board members to fund it.

Accept different annotations when students identify actual language from the passage and reasonably connect it to the council audience and the letter's purpose. For the open response, accept any three-sentence proposal plus one analysis sentence that identifies at least two purposeful word choices and explains their likely effect.