Trail Text Design

Analyze how a field guide's features shape a visitor's experience.

9.P.AC.1.d "Describe, analyze, and evaluate the design and organization of the text, explaining how specific formats, structures, patterns, and features influence the audience, contribute to the text's accessibility, and support the text's purpose..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the repeated parts of each stop, circle features that help a visitor find information quickly, and number the clues that show the route's order. Use your marks to analyze how the guide is designed.

Marsh Walk: Follow the Water

1. MARSH WALK: FOLLOW THE WATER. STOP 1, OAK GROVE, MAP CIRCLE 1. Begin beside the tall oaks at the trail entrance. The printed map uses a blue line to connect three numbered circles, and the line begins here. Walk toward the boardwalk, where the ground becomes lower and wetter. LOOK FOR: acorns and dry leaf litter under the trees. Rain falling on this higher ground can flow downhill toward the marsh. Salt marshes grow along sheltered coasts, where tides regularly cover low land with seawater. Continue until the boardwalk reaches the edge of thick grass.

2. STOP 2, MARSH EDGE, MAP CIRCLE 2. At the boardwalk's end, cordgrass grows in dense patches. Its stems can survive salt water by moving excess salt through special tissues. LOOK FOR: small snails on grass blades when the tide is low. They eat detritus, dead plant material carried by water or left by plants. A tide chart at this stop lists high and low tide times for the day. During high tide, water may cover the mud beneath the grass. Follow the arrow on the next trail post toward the tidal creek.

3. STOP 3, TIDAL CREEK, MAP CIRCLE 3. The boardwalk ends at a wooden viewing rail above a narrow creek. Twice each day in many places, ocean tides move water into and out of coastal marshes. LOOK FOR: an egret standing still near the creek edge. Egrets often hunt small fish and crustaceans in shallow water. The final sign shows a simple tide-table symbol beside the words "water rises" and "water falls." Before leaving, turn back and notice the taller oaks behind the grass. The return path follows the boardwalk to the trail entrance.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What design pattern repeats at all three stops? Explain how that pattern could help a visitor use the guide.

2. How does the order of the three stops support the guide's purpose of helping visitors observe a marsh habitat? Use details from the text.

3. How does the explanation after the word “detritus” make the guide more accessible to readers?

4. For a visitor who does not recognize a tide-table symbol, which part of the final sign would be more useful, the symbol or the words beside it? Explain your evaluation.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Using only facts from the passage, redesign Stop 2 for a visitor who cannot see the map. Write 55 to 70 words, including a clear heading and at least two text features, such as a labeled “LOOK FOR” line or a defined word.

ANSWER KEY

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GRADE 9 · 9.P.AC.1.d

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the repeated parts of each stop, circle features that help a visitor find information quickly, and number the clues that show the route's order. Use your marks to analyze how the guide is designed. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What design pattern repeats at all three stops? Explain how that pattern could help a visitor use the guide.	**Each stop begins with a stop number, place name, and map-circle number, and includes a LOOK FOR line. The repeated pattern lets visitors scan for the same kinds of information at each location.**
2	How does the order of the three stops support the guide's purpose of helping visitors observe a marsh habitat? Use details from the text.	**The route moves from the higher oak grove to the lower marsh edge and then to the tidal creek. This order helps visitors observe changes in ground conditions, plants, and water across the habitat.**
3	How does the explanation after the word "detritus" make the guide more accessible to readers?	**It defines detritus as dead plant material carried by water or left by plants, so readers who do not know the term can understand the sentence.**
4	For a visitor who does not recognize a tide-table symbol, which part of the final sign would be more useful, the symbol or the words beside it? Explain your evaluation.	**The words "water rises" and "water falls" would be more useful because they state the meaning in plain language without requiring the visitor to recognize the symbol.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

STOP 2: MARSH EDGE From the oak grove, walk toward the boardwalk. Stop where thick grass begins. LOOK FOR: small snails on grass blades at low tide. WORD WATCH: Detritus means dead plant material carried by water or left by plants. At high tide, water may cover the mud beneath the grass. Follow the next trail post toward the tidal creek.

Accept responses that use only passage-supported facts, give map-free directions or landmarks, and include a heading plus at least two clear text features. The explanation should show that the redesign improves access for a visitor who cannot use the map.