Who Gets Believed

Examine how a speaker's evidence, expertise, and interests shape a message.

9.T.C.2.b "Identify the impact of the speaker's reliability or credibility on the text. (I)"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline details that reveal each speaker's expertise, evidence, or personal interest. Circle each claim that may need more proof, then number the speakers 1, 2, and 3 in the margin.

A Plan for Brook Street

1 At a city council meeting, Dr. Lila Chen, a civil engineer who studies stormwater systems at the state university, urged the council to add rain gardens along Brook Street. She explained that her team measured runoff at six nearby sites for two years. Their report found that rain gardens slowed water after heavy storms, but she noted that results could differ on streets with clay soil. Chen gave the council a link to the full report and invited questions about the study's limits. She said the project could reduce, rather than eliminate, flooding.

2 Next, Marcus Dale, owner of a landscaping company that installs rain gardens, said the project would end flooding on Brook Street forever. He displayed before-and-after photographs from one client's yard, but he did not identify the storm dates or show water-level data. Dale told the council that his company could finish the work quickly if it won the contract. He also said that dozens of homeowners had praised his work, without naming them or sharing their comments. His statement gave the council a business owner's view of the proposal.

3 Finally, resident Ana Ruiz described wading through ankle-deep water outside her apartment during a July storm. Her firsthand account showed how flooding affected one person on Brook Street. However, Ruiz said rain gardens were the only solution because her neighbor had seen one work in another town. She did not provide measurements or information about other flood-control options. A council member asked whether the storm had overwhelmed nearby drains, and Ruiz answered that she did not know. Her experience added an important local perspective, while leaving questions about the cause of the flooding and the best response.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Identify two details that make Dr. Chen a credible speaker. How do those details affect the council's view of her recommendation?

2. How do Dale's missing data and possible contract affect the reliability of his claim that the project will end flooding forever?

3. Which part of Ruiz's statement is most reliable, and which part is less reliable? Explain why.

4. Which speaker's claim needs the most additional evidence before the council acts, Dale's or Chen's? Use details from the passage to explain.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write 4 to 5 sentences about a proposed change at your school. Invent two speakers with different connections to the change, include one specific piece of evidence for each speaker, and explain which speaker an audience should trust more and why.

ANSWER KEY

Who Gets Believed

GRADE 9 · 9.T.C.2.b

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline details that reveal each speaker's expertise, evidence, or personal interest. Circle each claim that may need more proof, then number the speakers 1, 2, and 3 in the margin. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Identify two details that make Dr. Chen a credible speaker. How do those details affect the council's view of her recommendation?	**Chen is a civil engineer who studies stormwater systems, and her team collected runoff data at six sites for two years. Her research, report link, and acknowledgment of limits make her recommendation more trustworthy and measured.**
2	How do Dale's missing data and possible contract affect the reliability of his claim that the project will end flooding forever?	**The council cannot verify his photographs or praise without dates, water-level data, names, or comments. Because his company could win the contract, his financial interest also gives listeners reason to question his absolute claim.**
3	Which part of Ruiz's statement is most reliable, and which part is less reliable? Explain why.	**Her description of wading through water outside her apartment is more reliable because it is firsthand experience. Her claim that rain gardens are the only solution is less reliable because it relies on a neighbor's example and provides no evidence about other causes or options.**
4	Which speaker's claim needs the most additional evidence before the council acts, Dale's or Chen's? Use details from the passage to explain.	**Dale's claim needs more evidence. He promises to end flooding forever but provides only unidentified photos and has a business interest, while Chen offers a two-year study, a full report, and limits on her conclusion.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

At a meeting about adding a later bus, the transportation director shared ridership records from the past three semesters. A student who wants to join an after-school club said that twenty students would use the bus, based on a survey she collected from club members. The director is more credible about districtwide need because the records include more students and several years. The student's survey still shows a real concern, but it may not represent students who do not belong to clubs.

Accept answers that distinguish firsthand experience from broad conclusions and explain how expertise, evidence, missing information, or personal interest affects credibility. For the open response, accept varied school proposals if students include two speakers, evidence for each, and a supported credibility judgment.