Seeds of Persuasion

Analyze how a public speech uses language to influence an audience.

9.T.SS.2.b "Use literary devices, figurative language, rhetorical language, and/or rhetorical appeals to create a variety of effects, as appropriate to intended purpose and target audience. (C)"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline figurative language, circle each rhetorical question, and write L beside details that use practical reasoning or evidence. Use your marks to notice how the speaker tries to persuade city council members.

A Garden for Maple Street

1 Members of the city council, the vacant lot on Maple Street is more than cracked pavement and weeds. It is a closed door in the middle of our neighborhood. We can open that door by building a community garden with raised beds, a water source, and benches. Picture children carrying tomato seedlings home, older neighbors trading recipes, and families meeting where they now hurry past. A garden would not erase every problem our town faces, but it would give residents a shared place to grow food, skills, and trust.

2 Some may ask, "Why spend public money on flowers and vegetables?" The better question is, "What does an unused lot cost us?" When trash collects there, crews must remove it. When the space feels neglected, people avoid walking beside it. Local volunteers have already offered tools and weekend labor, so city funds could focus on soil, lumber, and a fence. This is not a request for a fancy park. It is a practical plan, one that turns a burden into a harvest for the neighborhood.

3 Council members, you were elected to decide what kind of neighborhood we become. Will Maple Street remain a gray gap, or will it become a green meeting place? The choice is in your hands, and so is the first seed. Approve the garden project this spring. Invite residents to help shape its rules and care for its beds. A small plot can send roots through an entire community, reminding us that public spaces belong not to weeds or waste, but to people who choose to tend them.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What does the metaphor "a closed door" suggest about the vacant lot, and how does it support the speaker's purpose?

2. How do the two questions in the second paragraph shape the audience's thinking about the garden project?

3. Which detail in the second paragraph appeals to practical reasoning, and why might it persuade city council members?

4. Identify two rhetorical choices in the final paragraph and explain how they fit the speaker's audience and purpose.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 70 to 90 word statement to your principal proposing a water-refill station in the cafeteria. Include one rhetorical question, one figurative comparison, and one appeal to practical reasoning.

ANSWER KEY

Seeds of Persuasion

GRADE 9 · 9.T.SS.2.b

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline figurative language, circle each rhetorical question, and write L beside details that use practical reasoning or evidence. Use your marks to notice how the speaker tries to persuade city council members. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What does the metaphor "a closed door" suggest about the vacant lot, and how does it support the speaker's purpose?	**It suggests that the lot is an unused or blocked opportunity. It supports the speaker's purpose by presenting a garden as a way to open possibilities for the neighborhood.**
2	How do the two questions in the second paragraph shape the audience's thinking about the garden project?	**The first question raises a possible concern about spending money. The second question shifts attention to the costs of leaving the lot unused and neglected.**
3	Which detail in the second paragraph appeals to practical reasoning, and why might it persuade city council members?	**The detail that volunteers have offered tools and weekend labor appeals to practical reasoning. It suggests that the project has community support and could limit city costs.**
4	Identify two rhetorical choices in the final paragraph and explain how they fit the speaker's audience and purpose.	**The speaker directly addresses "Council members" and uses an imperative, "Approve the garden project." The rhetorical question and direct call to act urge decision makers to support the garden.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Principal Lee, our cafeteria needs a water-refill station. Why should students search for a working fountain when they can refill bottles quickly? A refill station would be a small river of convenience during lunch. It could reduce hallway traffic because students would not need to leave the cafeteria for water. Please place one near the serving line, where it can help students stay hydrated and return to class on time.

Accept equivalent explanations that connect a quoted or clearly identified technique to its persuasive effect on city council members. For Part 3, accept varied proposals if they meet the word range and include all three required techniques.