Behind the Library Door

Evaluate evidence, reasoning, and tone in a school board speech.

11-12.CC.5 "Evaluate a speaker's perspective, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, as well as assessing stylistic choices such as word choice, points of emphasis, and tone."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two pieces of evidence, circle a phrase chosen to influence the audience, and number the speaker's proposal 1 and response to a concern 2 so you can evaluate the argument.

A Place to Think

1 Members of the school board, I ask you to open our library during lunch twice a week for a four-week trial. On Tuesday, I counted 18 students sitting with notebooks in the hallway outside its locked doors. On Thursday, I counted 23. Some were talking, but several were trying to read beside the cafeteria line. I am one of the students who needs a quiet place before afternoon classes. A locked door cannot help us study. Those two counts do not prove that every student wants the library open, but they show a need worth testing.

2 I know this plan asks something of the adults who keep the library running. A lunch opening may reduce their break time or require paid coverage, and neither cost should be waved away. That is why I propose two days, not five, and a trial, not a permanent rule. During those four weeks, we could count visitors and ask staff whether the schedule is workable. If few students come or the staffing burden is too high, we should change the plan. Evidence should guide the decision, not just my wish for a quieter lunch.

3 Still, consider whose voices are easiest to hear at lunch. Students with a club room or a quiet corner already have somewhere to go; others end up working in a crowded hall. I do not blame the cafeteria staff or the librarians for that difference. I am asking us to treat a place to think as part of school life, not a special favor. Try the small opening, measure what happens, and listen to the people who would staff it. Then the board can decide whether a longer schedule is fair and useful.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What perspective does the speaker bring, and how might it shape what the speaker emphasizes?

2. How well do the hallway counts support a four-week trial rather than a permanent change? Explain one limit of the evidence.

3. How does the speaker address staffing concerns? What makes that reasoning convincing or incomplete?

4. Choose a phrase that shapes the speech's tone or emphasis. How might it affect the board audience?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write an 80 to 110-word response as a board member who supports further study but questions whether lunchtime library access is feasible. Use one detail from the speech, explain one limit of its evidence, maintain a respectful but skeptical tone, and propose a next step other than the speaker's four-week trial.

Behind the Library Door

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two pieces of evidence, circle a phrase chosen to influence the audience, and number the speaker's proposal 1 and response to a concern 2 so you can evaluate the argument. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What perspective does the speaker bring, and how might it shape what the speaker emphasizes?	**The speaker is a student who needs a quiet place before afternoon classes, so the speech emphasizes students working in the hallway and the value of a study space.**
2	How well do the hallway counts support a four-week trial rather than a permanent change? Explain one limit of the evidence.	**The counts show students with notebooks near the library on two days, which gives the board a reason to test access. They do not show how many students would use the library over time.**
3	How does the speaker address staffing concerns? What makes that reasoning convincing or incomplete?	**The speaker proposes only two days a week and asks staff about the workload during the trial. This takes the concern seriously, but the speech provides no estimate of staffing time or cost.**
4	Choose a phrase that shapes the speech's tone or emphasis. How might it affect the board audience?	**"A locked door cannot help us study" makes the closed library a vivid obstacle. It may lead board members to focus on students who lack a quiet workspace.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I appreciate the student's careful attention to classmates who study in the hallway. Seeing 23 students there on Thursday suggests we should investigate, but it does not tell us how many would enter the library or what lunch coverage would cost. We should not trade a quieter space for an unpaid obligation. Before scheduling any opening, I propose a confidential student survey about lunchtime study needs and a staffing estimate from the library team. Those results would let us weigh student access against staff time with more care.

Accept other passage-supported interpretations of the speaker's perspective, reasoning, or tone. For the final response, check that the proposed next step differs from the four-week trial and that the cited detail and evidence limit are accurate.