A Shadier Schoolyard

Study how a letter uses research to support a request.

5.W "Students research and write for various purposes using processes and applying their knowledge of language and sentence structure."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the writer's request, circle the source named for a fact, and number the two steps in the final paragraph. These marks will help you see how the writer builds a plan.

A Letter to Principal Chen

1 Dear Principal Chen, our class often waits on the bare blacktop after lunch. On sunny days, the pavement feels hot, and there is little shade near the benches. Could we plant one tree beside the seating area? A tree would make this spot more comfortable for students who eat or read outside. I looked into how trees affect warm places before making this request.

2 According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, trees cool nearby areas by providing shade and releasing water vapor. Shade matters because it keeps direct sunlight off the ground and people sitting there. This fact supports my request, but a new tree would need time to grow. Until then, we could use a temporary shade canopy, if the school has a safe place for one.

3 First, I ask the school to check that the planting spot has enough room for roots and does not block a walkway. Second, our class could take turns watering the tree with an adult's help. Would you meet with us to discuss the idea? With a safe location and a care plan, this tree could become a useful part of our schoolyard.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What change does the writer request, and which detail in the first paragraph helps explain the request?

2. How does naming the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency strengthen the writer's reason for planting a tree?

3. In the sentence that begins “Shade matters because,” what two ideas does the word “because” connect?

4. How do the two steps in the final paragraph address possible concerns about planting a tree?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a short letter to your principal requesting a schoolyard change other than planting a tree or adding a canopy. Use the passage's fact about trees, name its source, and give one step for carrying out your idea.

ANSWER KEY

A Shadier Schoolyard

GRADE 5 · 5.W

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the writer's request, circle the source named for a fact, and number the two steps in the final paragraph. These marks will help you see how the writer builds a plan. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What change does the writer request, and which detail in the first paragraph helps explain the request?	**The writer requests a tree beside the seating area. The blacktop feels hot, and there is little shade near the benches.**
2	How does naming the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency strengthen the writer's reason for planting a tree?	**It shows that the fact about trees cooling nearby areas comes from a named source, not just the writer's opinion.**
3	In the sentence that begins “Shade matters because,” what two ideas does the word “because” connect?	**It connects the idea that shade matters with the reason: shade keeps direct sunlight off the ground and people sitting there.**
4	How do the two steps in the final paragraph address possible concerns about planting a tree?	**Checking the spot addresses space and walkway safety. Taking turns watering addresses how the tree will be cared for.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Dear Principal Chen, could we move a picnic table beneath an existing tree? According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, trees cool nearby areas by providing shade and releasing water vapor. Moving the table would give students a cooler place to eat lunch. First, please check that the table would not block a path. Sincerely, Maya

Accept different wording for the passage-based answers when the writing choices are explained accurately. For the letter, look for a new request, accurate use of the named source and its fact, and a practical step.