Lunchroom Logic

Examine the evidence and rhetoric in a school policy speech.

9-10.CC.6 "Evaluate a speaker's perspective, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, identifying any fallacious reasoning or distorted evidence."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the speaker's main claim, circle two pieces of evidence, and number two places where the speaker's conclusion may go beyond the evidence. Use your marks to evaluate the argument.

A Phone-Free Lunch?

1 Our principal is considering a phone-free lunch period, and I think we should try it. I am not asking anyone to give up a phone for the whole day. I want us to place phones in our backpacks while we eat, with an exception for students who need to contact home. At my table last week, four students spent most of lunch scrolling. On the day their phones stayed away, all four joined a conversation about the school play. That small change felt like a glimpse of what lunch could be.

2 I also asked 18 students in the chess club whether they would support phone-free lunches. Fifteen said yes. That proves 83 percent of students at this school want the rule. A crowded cafeteria should sound like a place where people meet, not a waiting room full of glowing screens. Imagine a new student sitting alone while everyone nearby looks down. If we keep phones at lunch, we are choosing screens over real friendships. Anyone who cares about our school community should support this rule before another student has to eat in silence.

3 Some students say they use lunch to check work schedules or messages from family. Those concerns deserve an answer, but they do not outweigh what I saw at my table. The rule could allow quick checks outside the cafeteria, and staff could help students reach home in an emergency. I have not asked students outside the chess club, and I do not know whether my table's experience would happen elsewhere. Still, waiting for a perfect survey would delay a simple change. Let's try the rule for one month and ask students afterward whether lunch feels more welcoming.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What is the speaker's position, and how does the proposed exception address a concern about the rule?

2. Why does the chess club survey not prove that 83 percent of the whole school supports the rule?

3. The speaker says keeping phones means "choosing screens over real friendships." What choice does this leave out?

4. How does the image of a new student eating alone try to influence the audience? What does that image not establish?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 75 to 100 word response to the speaker. Evaluate the observation at the speaker's table, then propose a fair way to test the lunch rule without claiming that a one-month trial could prove more than it can.

Lunchroom Logic

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the speaker's main claim, circle two pieces of evidence, and number two places where the speaker's conclusion may go beyond the evidence. Use your marks to evaluate the argument. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What is the speaker's position, and how does the proposed exception address a concern about the rule?	**The speaker supports trying phone-free lunches. An exception for contacting home addresses the concern that students may need to reach family.**
2	Why does the chess club survey not prove that 83 percent of the whole school supports the rule?	**Only 18 chess club students were asked. Their answers may not represent students across the school.**
3	The speaker says keeping phones means "choosing screens over real friendships." What choice does this leave out?	**Students could use phones for necessary messages and still build friendships at lunch. The speaker presents two choices as if they are the only options.**
4	How does the image of a new student eating alone try to influence the audience? What does that image not establish?	**It appeals to concern for a lonely student. It does not establish that phones caused the student's isolation or that a ban would prevent it.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The four students at one table may have talked more because their phones were away, but one lunch cannot show what would happen across the school. I would support a one-month trial if students could still check urgent messages. Before and during the trial, the council could ask students from different grades how often they talk with others at lunch and whether they feel included. It should also collect concerns about access to family or work. Those results would help us decide whether to change the rule, not prove that phones cause isolation.

Accept other well-supported interpretations of the speech's rhetoric. In the open response, look for a clear limit on the table observation and a test that gathers broader evidence without overstating what it shows.