When Stories Argue

Use a brief narrative to support a request.

C.11-12.3 "Use narratives strategically in other modes of writing utilizing effective technique, well-chosen details and well-structured sequences for an intended purpose, including but not limited to introducing an issue and/or supporting a claim..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two details that make Eli's need for the late bus concrete, number three events in his afternoon in order, and circle the sentence that admits what his story cannot prove.

The Bus After Three

1 To the school board: Last Thursday, I watched the regular buses pull away at 3:15 while my classmate Eli stood beside me with a folder of unfinished algebra problems. Tutoring began at four, and the late bus was our only ride home afterward. The district is considering ending that bus to reduce transportation costs. On paper, the change might look like one fewer route. At the curb, Eli checked his phone and said, "My mom doesn't get off work until seven." He went inside anyway. I followed him, already wondering what would happen next semester if the route disappeared.

2 At 4:45, the hallway outside the tutoring room smelled of dry-erase markers and damp coats. Eli stopped by the trophy case, opened his folder, and pointed to a problem he had finally solved without help. "I thought I was just bad at this," he said. Then the bus engine rumbled outside, and we hurried through the doors. The short wait and quick departure mattered: because the bus came after tutoring, Eli could stay until he understood the work. I thought about students whose families could not leave work to pick them up. One ride made the lesson possible.

3 Without the late bus, Eli would have to choose between tutoring and getting home on the regular route. That choice would not be equal for everyone: a student with a ride could still stay, while a student without one could not. I know the district must weigh costs, and one afternoon cannot show how many students use the service. Before cutting the route, please ask students and families when they need it, and compare those answers with ridership and costs. Eli's solved problem is not a budget report. It is a reason to gather the evidence before deciding that the bus is expendable.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does the opening scene make the proposed route cut a problem for Eli? Use two details.

2. What does Eli's comment by the trophy case reveal? Why does its placement before the bus arrives matter?

3. How do the hallway details and the sound of the engine shape the scene?

4. How does the final paragraph use Eli's experience to support a request without treating one afternoon as complete proof?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write one paragraph of 85 to 105 words addressed to a decision-maker about a school change other than the late bus. Include a brief real or imagined scene with a person, two events in sequence, dialogue or a sensory detail, and a final sentence that connects the scene to your request.

When Stories Argue

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two details that make Eli's need for the late bus concrete, number three events in his afternoon in order, and circle the sentence that admits what his story cannot prove. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does the opening scene make the proposed route cut a problem for Eli? Use two details.	**Eli needs tutoring after the regular buses leave, and his mother cannot pick him up until seven. Without the late bus, he may have no way home after tutoring.**
2	What does Eli's comment by the trophy case reveal? Why does its placement before the bus arrives matter?	**His comment shows that tutoring changed how he sees his ability to solve algebra problems. Placing it just before the bus arrives connects that progress to the ride that lets him stay.**
3	How do the hallway details and the sound of the engine shape the scene?	**The smell of markers and damp coats places readers in the school after tutoring. The rumbling engine prompts the students to hurry and emphasizes the importance of the bus's timing.**
4	How does the final paragraph use Eli's experience to support a request without treating one afternoon as complete proof?	**The writer says Eli's story cannot show how many students use the bus, then asks the board to gather family input, ridership figures, and costs before deciding.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

To the facilities manager: On Monday, Maya held her empty bottle beneath the fountain outside the gym, but only a thin trickle came out. After practice, she tried again; the line behind her stretched to the locker room door. “Is it broken?” someone asked as the dismissal bell rang. Maya gave up and carried her bottle onto the bus. One fountain may not tell us how every station works, but students should not have to guess whether they can refill a bottle before leaving. Please inspect the gym fountain and post a repair date so students know when they can count on it.

Accept different cited details when the explanation connects a narrative choice to the writer's request. For the original paragraph, check that the events build toward a specific request rather than ending with an unrelated scene.