A Story With Purpose

Read how a brief story supports a proposal.

C.8.3 "Use narratives strategically in other modes of writing, utilizing effective technique, well-chosen details and well-structured sequences for an intended purpose. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two moments of action or dialogue that show why the current lost-and-found is hard to use, circle two phrases that signal a change in time, and box the opening request.

A Better Place for Lost Things

1 Principal Alvarez, I am asking you to test a weekly lost-and-found table outside the cafeteria. Last Thursday, I stood in the hallway before lunch, searching my backpack for the blue sweatshirt I had left in science. The bell rang, and a cold draft slipped through the open doors. "Maybe it's in the lost-and-found closet," Mina said. I knew where the closet was, but it was across campus. After eating, I had only five minutes before the next bell, so I walked away without checking.

2 The next day, I went to the closet after school. A jumble of jackets covered a box of water bottles, and my sweatshirt was wedged near the back. As I pulled it free, another student stopped at the door. "I thought they threw everything away," he said. I explained that the closet was open, but he hurried off to catch his bus. Seeing him leave made me realize that the problem was not just finding my sweatshirt. Students need a chance to look while they are already nearby.

3 A table outside the cafeteria every Friday at lunch would give students that chance without requiring a new room. Staff could place items there before lunch and return what remains to the closet afterward. Signs could ask students to claim only their own belongings, and the table could stay clear of the doorway. My search ended with a sweatshirt in my hands; his ended when he had to catch the bus. A four-week trial would show whether a more visible lost-and-found helps students reclaim what they have lost.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does the opening scene help the writer make a case for changing the lost-and-found?

2. What does the other student's dialogue add to the writer's argument?

3. Which phrase moves the story from the first search to the closet visit? How does the later visit develop the argument?

4. How does the final paragraph connect the story to a specific plan?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write one paragraph proposing a small change to a school routine other than the lost-and-found. Include a brief first-person scene, one sensory detail, one line of dialogue, a phrase that shifts time, and a final recommendation that connects to your scene.

ANSWER KEY

A Story With Purpose

GRADE 8 · C.8.3

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two moments of action or dialogue that show why the current lost-and-found is hard to use, circle two phrases that signal a change in time, and box the opening request. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does the opening scene help the writer make a case for changing the lost-and-found?	**The writer has too little time to reach the closet during lunch, so the scene shows why a table near the cafeteria could help.**
2	What does the other student's dialogue add to the writer's argument?	**His comment shows that a student may not know lost items are still available. His rush to catch the bus also shows why access matters.**
3	Which phrase moves the story from the first search to the closet visit? How does the later visit develop the argument?	**"The next day" marks the shift. The visit shows that the writer's problem was not unique because another student left without looking for his item.**
4	How does the final paragraph connect the story to a specific plan?	**It contrasts the two students' searches, then proposes a four-week trial of a table outside the cafeteria to see whether more students reclaim lost items.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

On Tuesday, the cafeteria smelled of oranges and warm bread when I noticed the clock above the doors. My tray still held scraps, and my classmates were already pushing toward the exit. "We have one minute," Jo whispered. I hurried to the trash can, but the line stretched past the water fountain. By the time I reached it, the bell had rung. At lunch the next day, I watched three students rush through the same crowded line. A five-minute cleanup warning would give us time to clear our trays before the bell.

Accept different passage details when students explain how those details support the proposal. For the writing task, look for a scene that gives a reason for the recommended change, not a scene added only for decoration.