The Waiting Question

Read how an argument makes a budget choice persuasive.

RI.11-12.6 "Determine an author's point of view, perspective and purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the effectiveness of the text."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the author's position, circle two details chosen to support it, and number two places where the wording shapes how you see the choice.

What a Bus Stop Needs First

1. At a bus stop, the hardest part of waiting is often not the wait itself but the blank space around it. Imagine a student watching the road after an evening shift: has the bus passed, or is it simply late? Our city council can fund one improvement this year, either more shade at stops or better arrival updates on displays and phones. I would fund the updates first. A clear estimate will not make a bus faster, but it can tell a rider whether to stay put, seek a safer waiting place, or make another plan.

2. Consider what uncertainty costs. A caregiver leaving work cannot easily tell someone at home when to expect them. A rider with a transfer may wonder whether there is still time to reach the next stop. These are not arguments against shade. Direct sun can make waiting uncomfortable and, in extreme heat, dangerous. Yet a shelter protects only those standing beneath it, while an arrival update can reach someone before they leave home and again as they travel. That wider reach makes information the better first purchase when the budget covers only one project.

3. Of course, a prediction is not a promise. Traffic and detours can change an arrival time, and a phone alert is useless to someone without a phone. The council should put readable displays at stops, keep estimates current, and state clearly when data are unavailable. It should also plan shade next, especially at stops exposed to intense heat. But if our first purchase must serve riders across their whole trip, let it answer the question a roof cannot: When is the bus coming? Information cannot cool the pavement; it can give people back a measure of control.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What does the author want the council to fund first, and what does the author want readers to believe about that choice?

2. Whose experiences does the author ask readers to consider? Explain how two of those experiences support the author's position.

3. How does the phrase "the blank space around it" in the opening paragraph shape the way readers understand waiting?

4. How do the author's admissions about shade and imperfect predictions make the final comparison between information and shade more persuasive?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a five-sentence council statement arguing to fund better bus arrival updates before shade. Include an original imagined exchange between two riders, acknowledge why shade matters, and end by explaining how your exchange could persuade residents.

ANSWER KEY

The Waiting Question

HIGH SCHOOL · RI.11-12.6

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the author's position, circle two details chosen to support it, and number two places where the wording shapes how you see the choice. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What does the author want the council to fund first, and what does the author want readers to believe about that choice?	**The author wants arrival updates funded before shade and wants readers to see reliable information as the more useful first purchase.**
2	Whose experiences does the author ask readers to consider? Explain how two of those experiences support the author's position.	**The author presents a student unsure whether a bus has passed, a caregiver unable to give an expected arrival time, and a rider worried about a transfer. Any two show how uncertainty affects riders' plans.**
3	How does the phrase "the blank space around it" in the opening paragraph shape the way readers understand waiting?	**The image makes uncertainty, rather than elapsed time alone, feel like the problem. It prepares readers to value information about when the bus will arrive.**
4	How do the author's admissions about shade and imperfect predictions make the final comparison between information and shade more persuasive?	**The author acknowledges that heat can be dangerous and predictions can fail, so the argument does not dismiss either concern. The final comparison then presents updates as the better first step, not a complete solution.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

As a council member, I would fund arrival updates before new shade structures because riders need to plan around uncertain schedules. At the stop, one rider says, 'I cannot tell if we missed it,' and another answers, 'The display says six minutes away.' With that answer, they can decide whether there is time to buy a ticket at the nearby kiosk. Shade matters, especially when heat puts people at risk, and it should be our next project. This small conversation invites residents to picture an everyday decision, making the value of timely information easier to understand.

Accept supported interpretations of the author's rhetoric, including effects of the opening image, rider examples, concessions, and closing comparison. In Part 3, the statement must favor funding arrival updates before shade, while acknowledging that shade matters.