

Words Fit Purpose

Notice how word choices shift for audience, purpose, and evidence.

9-10L3 “Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.”

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the three sentence-opening command verbs in paragraph 2, circle *could* and *would* in the first two sentences of paragraph 3, and number the paragraphs 1 through 3 to track the changing contexts.

Testing a Creek Carefully

- ① Public notice: On Monday, students at Harbor High will begin testing water from the creek behind the athletic field. The notice says, “Bring a clean, labeled bottle to Room 214 before first period.” It uses direct, brief language because families need to know what to do and when to do it. The notice does not promise that the creek is unsafe. Instead, it states that the project will compare samples collected after rain with samples collected during dry weather. Clear directions help volunteers arrive prepared without creating unnecessary alarm.
- ② Lab protocol: Arrive at the creek at 9:00 a.m. Place the sensor 15 centimeters below the surface, and hold it still for ten seconds. Record the temperature to the nearest tenth of a degree, then return the sensor to its case. This controlled wording is more formal than the notice because several teams must follow the same procedure. Details such as the depth, waiting time, and rounding rule reduce differences among readings. A casual phrase such as “check the water carefully” would leave too much to each team’s judgment and make their results harder to compare.
- ③ Report to the city council: The first two weeks of data could show a pattern, but they are not enough to support a claim about the creek’s long-term condition. The student team would need samples from several seasons and more rainstorms before making that claim. These cautious words fit a report that may guide public decisions. In contrast, a headline reading “Creek Is Dangerous” would sound certain before the evidence supports certainty. The report names limits, explains what additional evidence is needed, and lets readers judge the findings without being pushed toward a premature conclusion.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 How does the sentence beginning “Bring a clean, labeled bottle” fit the purpose and audience of the public notice?

2 Which sentence in paragraph 2 standardizes the measurement procedure? Explain how its details help different teams collect comparable readings.

3 Why would the phrase “check the water carefully” be less effective in the lab protocol?

4 How do *could* and *would* in the first two sentences of paragraph 3 affect the report’s meaning and tone?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write a 70-90 word formal proposal to a school principal about one practical improvement on campus. Include one cautious modal verb, such as *could*, *might*, or *would*, and one precise procedural detail. Underline the modal verb and the procedural detail.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline the three sentence-opening command verbs in paragraph 2, circle *could* and *would* in the first two sentences of paragraph 3, and number the paragraphs 1 through 3 to track the changing contexts. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does the sentence beginning “Bring a clean, labeled bottle” fit the purpose and audience of the public notice?	It gives families a direct, brief instruction with a specific item, place, and time so volunteers know how to prepare.
2	Which sentence in paragraph 2 standardizes the measurement procedure? Explain how its details help different teams collect comparable readings.	“Place the sensor 15 centimeters below the surface, and hold it still for ten seconds.” It gives the same depth and waiting time to every team, reducing differences among readings.
3	Why would the phrase “check the water carefully” be less effective in the lab protocol?	It is too vague and leaves decisions to each team’s judgment, making results harder to compare.
4	How do <i>could</i> and <i>would</i> in the first two sentences of paragraph 3 affect the report’s meaning and tone?	They make the claims cautious rather than certain. They show that the early data may suggest a pattern, but more evidence is needed.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Our school could reduce crowded hallways by adding a bicycle rack near the east entrance. I propose a four-week trial during October, when the weather is still suitable for cycling. Custodians would inspect the rack each afternoon, and students would register their bicycles in the main office. The trial should include twenty spaces placed 12 feet from the entrance so that doors and walkways remain clear. Afterward, the school can review registration and usage records.

Accept explanations that accurately connect direct commands, precise procedural language, or cautious modal verbs to the audience and purpose of each context. For the proposal, accept any formal 70-90 word response with an underlined cautious modal and an underlined specific procedural detail.