The Missing Bench

How a writer's viewpoint shapes the meaning of a public space

10.3.R.2 "Students will evaluate authors' perspectives and explain how those perspectives contribute to the meanings of texts."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two details that reveal the writer's perspective, circle one detail that presents a different perspective, and put a star beside a sentence that shows what the writer thinks the missing bench means.

Room to Rest

1. At 5:40 each morning, I waited for the first bus outside a closed bakery. After ten hours cleaning hospital rooms, I was grateful for the bench beneath the shelter. On rainy days, my legs ached enough that standing felt like another shift. One Monday, the bench was gone. A sign said the city had removed it after complaints about people sleeping there overnight. I understood why someone might want the stop kept clear, but the empty space did not look safer to me. It looked like a place where tired people had been told to stay on their feet.

2. The bakery owner told me customers had sometimes found bags and blankets blocking her doorway. She worried that people would stop coming in when she opened. A bus driver said the bench had also made it harder for riders using walkers to reach the curb when the shelter got crowded. I had not noticed that problem from my usual spot at the far end. Their concerns were real, and I did not want a solution that simply moved trouble to their doors. Still, removing every seat asked anyone with sore legs or limited balance to bear the cost.

3. A week later, a folding chair appeared beside the shelter. Someone had written, "For whoever needs it," on the back. By noon it had disappeared, and I could not tell who had taken it or why. That small chair did not solve the questions the bench raised: who should have room to rest, and who gets to decide what a public place is for? I wanted the city to talk with riders, nearby workers, and people who slept outside before choosing another fix. A clear path and a place to sit should not have to cancel each other out.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does the writer's experience after work shape the way they describe the empty space at the bus stop?

2. How does including the bakery owner's and bus driver's concerns affect the writer's message about the bench?

3. The writer admits they had not noticed a problem from their usual spot. What does this admission reveal about the limits of their perspective?

4. How do the folding chair and the final sentence develop the writer's view of what a public bus stop should provide?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a five- or six-sentence note to the city council from the bakery owner's perspective. Use two details from the passage, take one of the writer's concerns seriously, and explain what the empty space means from the bakery owner's point of view.

ANSWER KEY

The Missing Bench

GRADE 10 · 10.3.R.2

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two details that reveal the writer's perspective, circle one detail that presents a different perspective, and put a star beside a sentence that shows what the writer thinks the missing bench means. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does the writer's experience after work shape the way they describe the empty space at the bus stop?	**After a long shift cleaning hospital rooms, the writer needs a place to sit. They see the empty space as a sign that tired people are being denied a chance to rest.**
2	How does including the bakery owner's and bus driver's concerns affect the writer's message about the bench?	**Their concerns show that the bench could block a doorway or make access difficult for riders using walkers. This makes the message more complex than a simple call to put the bench back.**
3	The writer admits they had not noticed a problem from their usual spot. What does this admission reveal about the limits of their perspective?	**The writer's usual position gave them an incomplete view of the stop. The admission supports their argument that the city should hear from several people before choosing a solution.**
4	How do the folding chair and the final sentence develop the writer's view of what a public bus stop should provide?	**The chair shows that someone else recognized a need for seating, but it was not a lasting solution. The final sentence argues that a bus stop should offer both a clear path and a place to rest.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Dear council members, I open the bakery beside the bus shelter, where customers have sometimes found bags and blankets blocking my doorway. A bus driver has also said the bench made it harder for riders using walkers to reach the curb when the shelter was crowded. From my doorway, the empty space means a clearer entrance, not just the loss of a bench. Still, the writer's aching legs remind me that some riders need a place to sit. Please talk with riders, nearby workers, and people who sleep outside before deciding where seating should go. A useful stop should have room for people to pass through and people to rest.

Accept different interpretations when students support them with passage details and explain how a perspective shapes meaning. In Part 3, the bakery owner's viewpoint should be distinct from the writer's without dismissing the need for seating.