Who Took Action?

How sentence choices shape a story about change

10.5.R.1 "Students will recognize and analyze the effect of parallel structure, active and passive voice, and various types of phrases and clauses to convey specific meanings."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two parallel lists in the passage. Circle the passive-voice verb phrases in the fence notice and the district's reply, then consider what each sentence does or does not reveal about responsibility.

The Shade at Westbridge High

1 At noon, the blacktop behind Westbridge High held the sun's heat. Maya crossed it to reach the bus stop, stepping around a patch of shade no wider than her backpack. A notice on the fence read, "The old maples were removed last spring." It named neither the person who made the decision nor the reason. Maya remembered the trees: their leaves had softened the glare, slowed the wind, and sheltered students waiting for rides. Now the bench stood in full sun. When she touched its metal arm, she pulled her hand away.

2 At the next student council meeting, Maya read the notice aloud. "The old maples were removed," she repeated, "but who removed them?" The principal explained that a contractor had taken down the trees after an arborist found serious decay in their trunks. That answer changed the story: the trees had posed a safety risk, yet their absence still mattered. To make the courtyard usable, students proposed planting young trees, adding a fabric shade sail, and moving the bench beside the building. Because new trees would take years to grow, they wanted shade that could help students sooner.

3 The council sent its plan to the district. In its reply, the district wrote, "The proposal will be reviewed this summer." Maya noticed that the sentence promised a review but did not say who would make the decision. At the next meeting, she asked the facilities director to name the reviewers and the date they would report back. The director agreed to bring those details in June. Under the bare sky, Maya pictured the bus stop not as an empty space but as a place that could be cooler, safer, and more welcoming.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does the parallel list of what the maples' leaves had done help you understand their loss?

2. What does the passive wording on the fence leave out? How does the principal's explanation change your understanding of the removal?

3. What reason does the clause beginning "Because new trees would take years to grow" give for the students' plan?

4. What does the district's passive sentence leave unclear, and how does Maya respond?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write four sentences about a missing school item, using a parallel list, an active-voice sentence naming an actor, a passive-voice sentence that does not name an actor, and a dependent clause. Add a fifth sentence explaining how your choices of voice affect what readers know about responsibility.

ANSWER KEY

Who Took Action?

GRADE 10 · 10.5.R.1

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two parallel lists in the passage. Circle the passive-voice verb phrases in the fence notice and the district's reply, then consider what each sentence does or does not reveal about responsibility. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does the parallel list of what the maples' leaves had done help you understand their loss?	**The three matching verbs show that the trees helped students in several ways, making their removal feel like a significant loss.**
2	What does the passive wording on the fence leave out? How does the principal's explanation change your understanding of the removal?	**The notice leaves out who removed the trees and why. The principal names a contractor and explains that an arborist had found serious decay.**
3	What reason does the clause beginning "Because new trees would take years to grow" give for the students' plan?	**It explains why students wanted a shade sail or another source of shade that could help sooner.**
4	What does the district's passive sentence leave unclear, and how does Maya respond?	**It does not name who will review the proposal. Maya asks the facilities director to name the reviewers and say when they will report back.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The debate trophy was moved before lunch. Jordan checked the cabinet, searched the hallway, and asked the office staff. Because the team needed it for the assembly, Jordan searched the library. There, she found it on a shelf. The passive sentence hides who moved the trophy, while the active sentences show who searched for it.

Accept equivalent explanations grounded in the quoted sentences and their context. For Part 3, the parallel list must use matching grammatical forms, and the passive sentence must omit the actor.