Words That Persuade

Read a model request, then choose language for your own audience.

11.4.W.2 "Students will select language to create a specific effect in writing according to purpose and audience."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two phrases chosen to make the board care about students, and circle two phrases chosen to make the plan seem affordable or low risk.

A Better Use for the Courtyard

1 Dear members of the school board, at noon our courtyard offers a peculiar choice: squeeze into the crowded cafeteria or sit on concrete that has spent the morning collecting heat. The courtyard has space, but most students cross it without stopping. A few shade trees and movable tables would turn that empty stretch into a place where students could eat, talk, and return to class ready to focus. This is not a request for a decorative upgrade. It is a request to make existing school space useful during the busiest part of the day.

2 Cost matters, especially when every school improvement competes with another. That is why I am asking the board to approve a modest first step, not a complete redesign. Start with two movable tables and a shade solution that the facilities staff can review for safety and maintenance. If the courtyard draws regular use, the school can consider more seating later. This approach lets the board test an idea before making a larger commitment. It also gives students a clear sign that their daily experience deserves thoughtful attention, even when the budget demands restraint.

3 Imagine a student carrying a lunch tray past an empty courtyard because there is nowhere comfortable to stop. That small detour happens in a place we already own and maintain. Board members, you can change the decision students make at that doorway without promising a new building or a perfect solution. Please ask the facilities staff to estimate the cost of two tables and safe shade, then place the proposal on next month's agenda. A limited trial would give us something better than guesses: a chance to see whether a more welcoming courtyard becomes part of the school day.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does the opening choice between the cafeteria and hot concrete shape the board's view of the problem?

2. Why might “a modest first step, not a complete redesign” appeal to this audience?

3. What effect does “their daily experience deserves thoughtful attention” create alongside “the budget demands restraint”?

4. Why does the writer say a trial offers “a chance to see whether” the courtyard gets used instead of promising that it will?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 70 to 90 word email to your principal requesting a quiet study area during lunch in an unused classroom. Use one concrete detail to make the need vivid and one practical detail to make the request seem manageable; end with a specific action you want the principal to take.

ANSWER KEY

Words That Persuade

GRADE 11 · 11.4.W.2

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two phrases chosen to make the board care about students, and circle two phrases chosen to make the plan seem affordable or low risk. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does the opening choice between the cafeteria and hot concrete shape the board's view of the problem?	**It makes the problem feel immediate by showing that students lack a comfortable place to eat at noon.**
2	Why might "a modest first step, not a complete redesign" appeal to this audience?	**The board must weigh costs, so the phrase presents the request as limited rather than expensive or open-ended.**
3	What effect does "their daily experience deserves thoughtful attention" create alongside "the budget demands restraint"?	**The pairing appeals to concern for students while acknowledging the board's need to control spending.**
4	Why does the writer say a trial offers "a chance to see whether" the courtyard gets used instead of promising that it will?	**The cautious wording makes the proposal more credible because a trial can test the idea without guaranteeing the outcome.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Dear Principal Chen, During lunch, the library fills quickly, and the hallway outside it hums with conversations. Students who need twenty minutes to review notes often end up balancing notebooks on their knees. Could one unused classroom serve as a quiet study area twice a week? A teacher could supervise during an existing lunch duty, and students could sign in at the door. Please ask the staff to identify a room and try this plan for two weeks. Sincerely, Maya

For the marking job, accept phrases that reasonably build concern for students or reduce perceived cost or risk. For the email, look for language suited to a principal, a vivid detail, a manageable plan, and a specific requested action.