Who Gets to Wait?

Trace how a writer's perspective shapes the meaning of a public-space decision.

12.3.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 essayist's view, circle a competing concern, and write the number 1 beside the sentence that makes a general claim about how a city judges success.

The Bench at Route Six

(1) At the Route Six stop, the city replaced a wooden bench with a narrow rail meant for leaning. The notice called it a way to keep the sidewalk clear. On Monday morning, I watched Mr. Ibarra rest both hands on the rail while his knees shook. A student with a heavy backpack sat on the curb, then stood when a bus splashed through a puddle. The new rail looked tidy from across the street. Up close, its clean line seemed to require some bodies to do more work than others simply to wait.

(2) The transportation director, quoted in the neighborhood newsletter, argued that the old bench had blocked wheelchairs when riders gathered around it. I believe her concern: the sidewalk is narrow, and a seat that cuts off a path serves no one well. Still, removing the bench turned a design problem into a test of endurance. I asked a rider who uses a wheelchair what she thought. She wanted a clear route and a place for her father to sit beside her. "Why should we have to choose?" she said. Her question stayed with me longer than the city's notice.

(3) The following week, someone left a folding chair at the stop. It vanished by evening, but for a few hours it offered a stubborn suggestion. A wider waiting area would cost money and space, and I cannot promise that every stop can hold one. Yet a city that counts a clear sidewalk as success without counting who can wait there is measuring too little. I no longer see the missing bench as a small change in street furniture. It is a question about whose discomfort a public decision makes easy to overlook.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does the contrast between the rail seen from across the street and up close reveal the essayist's perspective?

2. Why does the essayist acknowledge the transportation director's concern, and how does that choice affect the argument?

3. How does the wheelchair rider's question challenge the way the bench removal was presented?

4. How does the folding chair contribute to the meaning of the essay's final claim?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

A library plans to replace its reading chairs with standing counters to free floor space. In one paragraph, imagine how a visitor who needs a chair and a librarian concerned about crowding would each describe the change, then evaluate how their perspectives shape its meaning and which account you find more complete.

ANSWER KEY

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GRADE 12 · 12.3.R.2

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two details that reveal the essayist's view, circle a competing concern, and write the number 1 beside the sentence that makes a general claim about how a city judges success. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does the contrast between the rail seen from across the street and up close reveal the essayist's perspective?	**From afar, the rail looks tidy. Up close, people struggle to wait beside it, showing that the essayist values how a public design serves people over how neat it looks.**
2	Why does the essayist acknowledge the transportation director's concern, and how does that choice affect the argument?	**The essayist accepts that the old bench could block wheelchair access. This concession makes the argument more nuanced: the city needs both a clear path and a place to sit.**
3	How does the wheelchair rider's question challenge the way the bench removal was presented?	**Her question rejects the idea that the city must choose between wheelchair access and seating. It supports the essayist's view that removing the bench leaves an important need unmet.**
4	How does the folding chair contribute to the meaning of the essay's final claim?	**The temporary chair suggests that someone still needed a seat. It helps turn the missing bench into a question about whose discomfort the city overlooks.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

A visitor who needs a chair might describe scanning the library for somewhere to rest, treating the new counters as a sign that quiet reading is only for people who can stand. A librarian might point to crowded aisles and describe the counters as a way to make movement easier. Both notice a real barrier, but neither account alone settles who gains access. I find the visitor's account more complete if the plan removes every chair, because clear aisles cannot serve readers who must leave before they finish a page.

Accept different evaluations in Part 3 if students distinguish the two perspectives, explain how each changes the proposal's meaning, and support their judgment with a specific detail.