Small Patch, Strong Case

How phrases, clauses, and fragments shape a proposal

12.5.W.1 "Students will add clarity, variety, and/or style to their writing and presentations with parts of speech and various types of phrases and clauses, intentionally breaking the rules for effect when appropriate."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one descriptive phrase, circle one dependent clause, and number two sentence fragments used for emphasis to see how the writer shapes the proposal.

A Different Kind of School Lawn

1 At the edge of our school parking lot, a narrow strip of grass waits for a mower every week of the growing season. After rain, its soil turns slick; by August, the blades look tired and pale. Imagine replacing that strip with native wildflowers suited to our region, plants that can offer pollen and shelter to local insects. Not a wilderness. A deliberate patch of habitat. The change would not erase every maintenance task, but it could replace frequent mowing with seasonal care while giving students a place to observe living systems close to class.

2 Consider the bee, dusted with yellow pollen, working a blossom beside the curb. A student arriving late might miss it entirely, but a class with five minutes outdoors could watch its movements and ask better questions about pollination. Because different flowers bloom at different times, a thoughtfully chosen mix can provide resources across more of the growing season. The garden would be small, yet its scale is an advantage: within a few steps, students could compare leaf shapes, record visitors, and notice what changes after a hard rain. This is not a substitute for a science lab; it is evidence growing outside one.

3 Before anyone orders seeds, we should ask who will care for the space during summer break. A garden without a plan can become a bed of weeds, and some plants sold as wildflowers are not native to every region. The grounds crew, whose work keeps the campus usable, should help select the site and a realistic schedule. Start with one strip, one planting plan, and a way to measure what visits the flowers. Then revise. If the patch succeeds, it will offer something the current grass cannot: a reason to stop, look closely, and see the campus as more than pavement.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How do the fragments “Not a wilderness” and “A deliberate patch of habitat” clarify the proposal?

2. What does “dusted with yellow pollen” add to the description of the bee?

3. Why does the writer add the clause “whose work keeps the campus usable” when mentioning the grounds crew?

4. How does the short sentence “Then revise” change the pace before the longer sentence beginning “If the patch succeeds”?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 70 to 100 word proposal for improving a public space other than the school parking strip. Include a descriptive phrase, a dependent clause, and one intentional sentence fragment for emphasis.

ANSWER KEY # Small Patch, Strong Case

GRADE 12 · 12.5.W.1

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one descriptive phrase, circle one dependent clause, and number two sentence fragments used for emphasis to see how the writer shapes the proposal. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How do the fragments “Not a wilderness” and “A deliberate patch of habitat” clarify the proposal?	**They contrast an uncontrolled space with a planned planting, emphasizing that the proposal is manageable.**
2	What does “dusted with yellow pollen” add to the description of the bee?	**The descriptive phrase gives readers a visible detail that makes the bee's visit to the flower easier to picture.**
3	Why does the writer add the clause “whose work keeps the campus usable” when mentioning the grounds crew?	**The clause explains why the grounds crew's knowledge should matter in choosing the site and care schedule.**
4	How does the short sentence “Then revise” change the pace before the longer sentence beginning “If the patch succeeds”?	**The short command gives the plan a quick, practical next step; the longer conditional sentence slows down to show its possible benefit.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

At the bus stop beside the community center, riders stand on cracked concrete with nowhere to sit. A sturdy bench, shaded by a simple roof, would make the wait easier for people carrying bags or using canes. Because afternoon sun reaches the stop directly, the roof would also offer relief on hot days. Not a luxury. The transit agency should check sight lines and sidewalk clearance before installing anything, so the improvement helps riders without blocking people who pass by.

Accept other accurate explanations of how the cited language affects clarity, emphasis, or pace. In Part 3, look for a distinct public-space proposal and purposeful use of all three required constructions.