Words That Persuade

Notice how word choices support a request.

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

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Read the letter. Underline two phrases that make the tree appealing, and circle one phrase that makes the request sound practical.

A Letter About the Courtyard Tree

1 Dear Principal Rivera, at lunch, the courtyard tree casts a patch of shade across the benches. Students gather there with sandwiches and sketchbooks while sunlight flashes on the pavement beyond. I heard that the school may replace the tree with more paved space. I know we need room to walk, but I hope we can find a way to keep it. Without that wide green roof, our lunch spot could become a bare, hot square. The tree makes an ordinary corner feel like a place to stay.

2 Could we leave space around the trunk when the new path is planned? A path could curve past the tree instead of crossing its roots. This idea would still give students a clear place to walk. Before any work begins, an arborist could check the tree's health and advise the school about its roots. I am not asking you to ignore safety or access. I am asking us to look closely at the choices before we lose something that has made the courtyard useful for years.

3 Next week, our class can collect students' ideas for a path that works for everyone. We could bring those ideas to a meeting and listen to the grounds crew, too. Imagine the first warm day next spring: the path is smooth, the benches are full, and leaves ripple above the people passing through. Please let us explore a plan that keeps the tree while making the courtyard easier to use. A small change in the plan could protect a place many students already share.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What feeling does “wide green roof” create? Why might the writer choose it instead of “branches”?

2. How does “bare, hot square” help the writer's purpose?

3. Why does the writer mention an arborist and say “safety or access”? What effect might those choices have on the principal?

4. What picture does “leaves ripple above the people passing through” create, and how does it support the request?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write four or five sentences asking your school librarian to add a quiet reading corner. Include one vivid phrase that makes the corner inviting and one practical detail that shows how it could work.

ANSWER KEY

Words That Persuade

GRADE 6 · 6.4.W.2

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Read the letter. Underline two phrases that make the tree appealing, and circle one phrase that makes the request sound practical. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What feeling does “wide green roof” create? Why might the writer choose it instead of “branches”?	**It makes the tree feel like a shelter, helping the principal see why students value its shade.**
2	How does “bare, hot square” help the writer's purpose?	**It makes the courtyard without the tree seem less pleasant, supporting the request to keep it.**
3	Why does the writer mention an arborist and say “safety or access”? What effect might those choices have on the principal?	**They show that the writer takes the principal's concerns seriously and offers a practical way to check the tree before making a decision.**
4	What picture does “leaves ripple above the people passing through” create, and how does it support the request?	**It shows a pleasant courtyard where students can still walk easily, making the proposed plan seem possible and appealing.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Dear Ms. Chen, could the library have a quiet reading corner near the back wall? A soft pool of lamplight could make that spot feel calm when the rest of the room is busy. We could place two chairs there and leave the walkway clear. Please consider trying the corner for a week to see whether students use it.

Accept different interpretations of the letter's effects when students connect specific language to the writer's request. In Part 3, look for an inviting phrase and a workable detail, not just a request.