Make Your Claim

Read a writer's draft, then shape a focused thesis.

6.6.W.2 "Students will develop a clear, concise thesis statement."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline Maya's final thesis, circle the change it proposes, and number its two reasons 1 and 2.

One Idea for Less Waste

1 At Juniper Middle School, lunch ends with a rush of students carrying trays and empty drink bottles. Many bottles land in the trash beside the cafeteria door. A recycling bin sits farther down the hall, where fewer students pass on their way to class. Maya wants to write a short argument about cutting waste at school. She could suggest moving the recycling bin, starting a reusable-tray program, or making it easier to refill water bottles. Each idea calls for a different argument, so she chooses one to develop.

2 Maya chooses a water-bottle refill station near the cafeteria. During lunch, the drinking fountain by the gym has a line, and its low spout makes tall bottles awkward to fill. Some students buy bottled water because it is quicker than waiting for the fountain. A refill station in a busy spot could make a reusable bottle more convenient. It would not erase every piece of cafeteria trash, but it could give students another way to get water without buying a new plastic bottle each day.

3 Her first draft says, "There are a lot of things about lunch that could be better, and people should try to improve them." That sentence names neither a change nor a reason. Maya checks the notes she collected and writes a sharper thesis: "Our school should install a water-bottle refill station near the cafeteria to make reusable bottles easier to use and reduce disposable bottle waste." The new sentence states one action and two reasons. Now Maya can choose evidence about the fountain line and empty bottles instead of trying to discuss every lunch problem.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why is Maya's first draft too broad to serve as a thesis for her argument?

2. What change does Maya's final thesis propose, and what two reasons does it give?

3. If Maya chose the recycling-bin idea instead, write a clear, concise thesis supported by paragraph 1.

4. A classmate writes, "A refill station will solve every cafeteria waste problem." What makes that claim too broad, and how could the classmate narrow it?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Choose a change that could improve your classroom or school, but do not choose a cafeteria waste or water idea. Write one clear thesis sentence that names the change and gives two specific reasons for it.

ANSWER KEY

Make Your Claim

GRADE 6 · 6.6.W.2

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline Maya's final thesis, circle the change it proposes, and number its two reasons 1 and 2. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why is Maya's first draft too broad to serve as a thesis for her argument?	**It does not name a specific change or give a reason for making one.**
2	What change does Maya's final thesis propose, and what two reasons does it give?	**It proposes a water-bottle refill station near the cafeteria to make reusable bottles easier to use and reduce disposable bottle waste.**
3	If Maya chose the recycling-bin idea instead, write a clear, concise thesis supported by paragraph 1.	**Our school should move the recycling bin beside the cafeteria trash bin so students can recycle empty bottles on their way to class.**
4	A classmate writes, "A refill station will solve every cafeteria waste problem." What makes that claim too broad, and how could the classmate narrow it?	**The passage says a refill station would not erase every piece of cafeteria trash. A narrower claim is that it could help reduce disposable bottle waste.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Our school should add a quiet reading corner in the library so students can focus on books and take a peaceful break during free time.

Accept other concise theses for question 3 if they propose moving the recycling bin and connect the change to the bottles or students' route to class. For Your Turn, check for one specific change and two reasons that fit it.