Words for the Room

Listen to a conversation and analyze language choices for different audiences.

8.LL.18 "Analyze a speaker's formality of language in order to comprehend, interpret, and respond appropriately."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Teacher: read all three paragraphs aloud, distinguishing the dialogue voices. Give students only the questions/response sheet (PDF page 2); retain this source page and key. Read twice and repeat on request. Collect first answers before sharing the text.

Teacher Read-Aloud: The Garden Request

1. At lunch, Maya held up a dented plastic bottle from the school garden. The rain barrel had run dry again, and seedlings were curling in their trays. "We need a better watering plan," she told her friends. "I could ask Principal Chen about using the courtyard faucet." Leo grinned. "Tell her our tomatoes are staging a protest." Maya laughed. "Yeah, the tomatoes are totally done waiting. If she says yes, we can take turns carrying water." She scribbled a few notes before the bell rang.

2. After school, Maya knocked on Principal Chen's open door. "Good afternoon, Principal Chen. May I discuss a way to water the garden during dry weeks?" she asked. When the principal nodded, Maya set her notes on the desk. "The rain barrel is empty, and the plants need regular watering. Would you consider allowing our club to use the courtyard faucet?" Principal Chen glanced at the notes. "Who would make sure the faucet is turned off?" Maya paused, then said, "I can provide a schedule showing who will check it each day."

3. Outside the office, Leo was waiting by the lockers. "So, did you pitch the tomato protest?" he asked. Maya shook her head. "Nope. I asked if the club could use the faucet, and she asked who would check it. I said I'd make a schedule." Leo tapped his empty bottle. "Think she'll let us?" Maya looked back at the office door. "Maybe. Let's get a list of volunteers before we ask again." That evening, she drafted a short message to the club: "Who can check the faucet on Tuesdays?"

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. After listening, compare one phrase Maya says to her friends with one she says to Principal Chen. Which sounds more formal, and what makes it sound that way?

2. How does Maya's question "Would you consider allowing our club to use the courtyard faucet?" affect the way her request sounds?

3. Principal Chen asks who will turn off the faucet. Why does Maya's reply fit the tone of their conversation? Use words from her reply as evidence.

4. When Maya tells Leo about the conversation, which word shows that her speech is less formal again? Why does it fit this listener?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a formal request and a casual request on a separate slip. Read them aloud to a partner who cannot see the slip; the partner gives a fitting spoken reply to each. Switch roles, then write three sentences comparing the requests, replies, and language clues you heard.

ANSWER KEY

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PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Teacher: read all three paragraphs aloud, distinguishing the dialogue voices. Give students only the questions/response sheet (PDF page 2); retain this source page and key. Read twice and repeat on request. Collect first answers before sharing the text. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	After listening, compare one phrase Maya says to her friends with one she says to Principal Chen. Which sounds more formal, and what makes it sound that way?	**"Would you consider allowing our club to use the courtyard faucet?" is more formal than "Yeah, the tomatoes are totally done waiting." It is a polite, carefully worded question rather than a joke with casual wording.**
2	How does Maya's question "Would you consider allowing our club to use the courtyard faucet?" affect the way her request sounds?	**It makes the request sound respectful because Maya asks the principal to consider the idea instead of demanding permission.**
3	Principal Chen asks who will turn off the faucet. Why does Maya's reply fit the tone of their conversation? Use words from her reply as evidence.	**Maya's reply is clear and businesslike. "I can provide a schedule" offers a specific way to answer the principal's concern.**
4	When Maya tells Leo about the conversation, which word shows that her speech is less formal again? Why does it fit this listener?	**"Nope" is casual. It fits because Maya is talking with her friend Leo, not making a request to the principal.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

My partner used "Could you please" and a complete request, so I replied, "Yes, I will return it by Friday." For "Hey, can you bring the form?", I replied, "Sure, I'll bring it." Both replies answer the request politely, while the wording fits each level of formality.

Read the narrative and dialogue aloud from a separate copy; listeners must not read along first. Accept supported phrase comparisons and other fitting replies. In the partner task, give the speaker the prompt while the listener keeps it hidden. Assess actual listening and response, not just written sentence labels; formality is not the same as politeness.