Harbor of Persuasion

Read a Classical-period speech in Richard Crawley's translation.

ELA.11.R.2.3 "Analyze an author's choices in establishing and achieving purpose(s) in speeches and essays from the Classical Period."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Thucydides, History of the Peloponnesian War, Book II, Funeral Oration of Pericles (430 BCE), translated by Richard Crawley (public domain). Selected nonconsecutive passages from sections 37 and 40; original wording retained, selection breaks added. Source: Internet Classics Archive, https://classics.mit.edu/Thucydides/pelopwar.2.second.html. Thucydides records the speech; this is not a verbatim modern transcript. The speaker presents an idealized claim about Athens; analyze that claim rather than assume it describes every resident equally. Underline claims that praise Athens. Circle contrasts or value-laden words, and number each paragraph's main rhetorical choice. Explain how those choices support the speaker's purpose.

Pericles on Athenian Public Life — Thucydides, Book II

1. Our constitution does not copy the laws of neighbouring states; we are rather a pattern to others than imitators ourselves. Its administration favours the many instead of the few; this is why it is called a democracy.

2. But all this ease in our private relations does not make us lawless as citizens. Against this fear is our chief safeguard, teaching us to obey the magistrates and the laws, particularly such as regard the protection of the injured, whether they are actually on the statute book, or belong to that code which, although unwritten, yet cannot be broken without acknowledged disgrace.

3. Our public men have, besides politics, their private affairs to attend to, and our ordinary citizens, though occupied with the pursuits of industry, are still fair judges of public matters; for, unlike any other nation, regarding him who takes no part in these duties not as unambitious but as useless, we Athenians are able to judge at all events if we cannot originate, and, instead of looking on discussion as a stumbling-block in the way of action, we think it an indispensable preliminary to any wise action at all.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What purpose does the speaker pursue, and how does calling Athens a pattern rather than an imitator support it?

2. How does many instead of few help the speaker praise the government?

3. Why does paragraph 2 insist that private ease does not make citizens lawless?

4. How does contrasting a stumbling-block with an indispensable preliminary support the speaker's purpose?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence civic mini-speech urging action on a school or community issue. State your purpose, use a shared value, give a concrete consequence, and answer one concern; then write one sentence explaining how two of your choices help achieve your purpose.

ANSWER KEY # Harbor of Persuasion

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Thucydides, History of the Peloponnesian War, Book II, Funeral Oration of Pericles (430 BCE), translated by Richard Crawley (public domain). Selected nonconsecutive passages from sections 37 and 40; original wording retained, selection breaks added. Source: Internet Classics Archive, https://classics.mit.edu/Thucydides/pelopwar.2.second.html. Thucydides records the speech; this is not a verbatim modern transcript. The speaker presents an idealized claim about Athens; analyze that claim rather than assume it describes every resident equally. Underline claims that praise Athens. Circle contrasts or value-laden words, and number each paragraph's main rhetorical choice. Explain how those choices support the speaker's purpose. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What purpose does the speaker pursue, and how does calling Athens a pattern rather than an imitator support it?	**He praises Athens and its civic way of life. Calling it a pattern presents it as a model for other states rather than a follower.**
2	How does many instead of few help the speaker praise the government?	**The contrast presents democracy as favouring a broad public instead of a small group, appealing to shared civic benefit.**
3	Why does paragraph 2 insist that private ease does not make citizens lawless?	**It answers a concern that freedom encourages disorder; obedience to protective laws presents Athenian freedom as responsible.**
4	How does contrasting a stumbling-block with an indispensable preliminary support the speaker's purpose?	**The contrast recasts discussion as necessary preparation for wise action, praising thoughtful civic participation rather than treating debate as delay.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

School board members, add covered bike racks beside the east entrance before the rainy season. Our school should protect students who choose a healthy and affordable way to travel. Without dry, secure parking, more students will leave bicycles at home or risk damaged locks and wet books. Although the racks will cost money, using the unused space near the entrance will keep the project limited and useful. The appeal to student safety and the practical response to cost make the request sound responsible.

Accept purpose/choice explanations supported by this actual excerpt. For Part 3, retain the four-sentence civic mini-speech and separate explanatory sentence; check purpose, shared value, consequence, concern and how two choices help. Thucydides, History of the Peloponnesian War, Book II, Funeral Oration of Pericles (430 BCE), translated by Richard Crawley (public domain). Selected nonconsecutive passages from sections 37 and 40; original wording retained, selection breaks added. Source: Internet Classics Archive, https://classics.mit.edu/Thucydides/pelopwar.2.second.html. Thucydides records the speech; this is not a verbatim modern transcript. The speaker presents an idealized claim about Athens; analyze that claim rather than assume it describes every resident equally.