Build the Meaning

Trace how an author builds an idea through purposeful sections.

8.T.SS.1 "Organization: Analyze and use organizational structures to craft meaning."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline words or phrases that signal order or a shift in focus. In the margin, write a short note naming the job each paragraph does, so you can trace how the writer builds meaning.

Cooling a City Corner

1. On summer afternoons, city blocks can become much hotter than nearby parks. Dark pavement and roofs absorb sunlight, then release heat slowly after sunset. This urban heat island effect can make homes uncomfortable and can raise the demand for air conditioning. In the Riverside neighborhood, residents noticed that the bus stop near a wide parking lot offered little shade. Rather than treating the hot stop as an isolated inconvenience, a student group asked what changes could cool the area.

2. First, the group mapped surfaces around the stop at noon. They found almost no trees and several large stretches of black asphalt. Next, they presented a plan to the city: plant two shade trees, add a narrow rain garden, and paint the shelter roof with a light-colored coating. Each part had a different purpose. Leaves would block some sunlight, the garden would absorb rainwater, and the lighter roof would reflect more sunlight than a dark one. The plan organized several small actions around one goal: reducing heat exposure for waiting riders.

3. Finally, the group explained how it would measure the project's effect. Before planting began, volunteers recorded afternoon temperatures at the stop and at a shaded corner nearby. They planned to repeat the readings after the trees and garden were established. The comparison would not prove that every temperature change came from the project. Weather and traffic could also matter. Still, the measurements could show whether the area became cooler over time. By ending with a method for checking results, the article shows that a useful plan needs evidence, not just appealing ideas.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What organizational job does paragraph 1 do? Explain how it prepares you for the rest of the passage.

2. Which two words in paragraph 2 signal the order of the group's actions? What information follows each word?

3. Why does the writer explain the purpose of each part of the plan after listing the three actions?

4. How does paragraph 3 shift the focus of the passage, and what does this ending add to the meaning?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 90 to 120 word proposal in exactly two paragraphs about improving a school space. Organize the first paragraph around a problem and its effects, then organize the second paragraph around a solution and a way to check whether it worked.

ANSWER KEY

Build the Meaning

GRADE 8 · 8.T.SS.1

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline words or phrases that signal order or a shift in focus. In the margin, write a short note naming the job each paragraph does, so you can trace how the writer builds meaning. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What organizational job does paragraph 1 do? Explain how it prepares you for the rest of the passage.	**It introduces the heat problem, explains its causes and effects, and leads to the group's question about how to cool the area.**
2	Which two words in paragraph 2 signal the order of the group's actions? What information follows each word?	**First introduces the mapping and observations. Next introduces the plan presented to the city.**
3	Why does the writer explain the purpose of each part of the plan after listing the three actions?	**The explanation shows how the separate actions work together to reduce heat exposure, rather than reading like an unrelated list.**
4	How does paragraph 3 shift the focus of the passage, and what does this ending add to the meaning?	**It shifts from describing the plan to explaining how the plan will be evaluated. The ending emphasizes that evidence is needed to judge whether the plan works.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

During lunchtime, the hallway outside the library becomes crowded and noisy. Students waiting for computers stand near classes passing by, so voices and backpacks block the entrance. The noise makes it hard for students already inside to read or work with a partner. A crowded entrance also slows students who need to return books quickly.

To solve this problem, the school could move the computer sign-up sheet inside the library and place floor arrows along one side of the hallway. A student volunteer could direct visitors during the busiest ten minutes. After two weeks, the librarian could compare noise reports and entrance wait times with earlier records. This ending provides a way to judge whether the changes helped.

Accept equivalent descriptions of the passage's progression from problem, to response, to evaluation. For the open task, accept varied topics if the two paragraphs clearly serve the required organizational jobs and include a realistic way to evaluate the solution.