Lights Out, Birds Up

Analyze how features, organization, and viewpoint shape an informational message.

7.RI.2 "Craft and Style Analyze how an author uses text features (e.g., boldface and italics; type set in color; underlining; indentation; sidebars; illustrations, graphics and photographs; headings and subheadings…"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each bold heading, circle the italicized term and its definition, and write Problem, Evidence, or Solution in the margin beside each paragraph. These marks show how text features and organization guide the author's message.

A Night Map: Why Cities Need Dark Corners

1 The Invisible Danger.

Each spring and fall, millions of birds travel across North America. At night, bright city lights can pull migrating birds off their routes. Birds may circle lighted buildings until they are exhausted, or they may strike glass they cannot see. Scientists call this problem *light pollution*, a human-made glow that changes the natural darkness of the sky. The danger is easy for people to miss because it happens above busy streets and behind shining windows.

2 A Simple Switch.

During peak migration nights, some cities ask building owners to turn off unnecessary lights after 11 p.m. This action, often called Lights Out, saves energy and gives birds a clearer path. A research team studying a Chicago building found that bird collisions dropped sharply when many lights were switched off during migration. The evidence suggests that a small change can protect creatures making an enormous journey on long seasonal routes through crowded skies.

3 A Shared Skyline.

Supporters of Lights Out programs do not argue that every window must stay dark. Instead, they focus on hours when migration is strongest and lighting is least needed. This practical approach treats city residents as partners, not villains. The phrase "shared skyline" emphasizes the author's belief that people are responsible for spaces animals also use. By ending with a manageable solution, the article aims to persuade readers that protecting birds can fit into ordinary city life.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How do the three bold headings and their order help you understand the author's message?

2. Why does the author italicize the term *light pollution* and define it right away?

3. What does the contrast in the phrase "partners, not villains" suggest about how the author wants readers to view city residents?

4. What is the author's purpose, and what belief about people and wildlife does the passage reveal?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Choose a local environmental issue. Write a 55 to 70 word mini-passage with a bold heading and one italicized key term that you define in context. Organize it to show a problem and a practical response, and use word choice that reveals your viewpoint.

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PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline each bold heading, circle the italicized term and its definition, and write Problem, Evidence, or Solution in the margin beside each paragraph. These marks show how text features and organization guide the author's message. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How do the three bold headings and their order help you understand the author's message?	**They guide the reader from the danger birds face, to a practical action, to shared responsibility. This problem-to-solution order supports the author's effort to persuade readers.**
2	Why does the author italicize the term *light pollution* and define it right away?	**The italics signal an important technical term, and the definition helps readers understand that it means human-made light that changes natural darkness.**
3	What does the contrast in the phrase "partners, not villains" suggest about how the author wants readers to view city residents?	**The author wants readers to see city residents as people who can help solve the problem, not as people to blame.**
4	What is the author's purpose, and what belief about people and wildlife does the passage reveal?	**The purpose is to persuade readers to support reducing unnecessary lights during migration. The author believes people have a responsibility to protect animals that share city spaces.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Cooler Schoolyards.

Bare pavement heats up quickly during warm months. Planting shade trees can lower surface temperatures and give students cooler places to wait and play. This *tree canopy*, the leaves and branches that form shade overhead, also provides habitat for birds. Schools should treat trees as useful infrastructure, not decoration, because a greener campus protects both people and wildlife.

Accept responses that identify the headings as a progression from problem to action and responsibility, the italicized term as a defined key idea, and the contrast as cooperative rather than blaming language. For Part 3, accept any accurate 55 to 70 word passage that includes the required features, clear organization, and a discernible viewpoint.