Make Your Case

Study how a speech builds a practical proposal.

11-12.SL.4.a "Demonstrate organization, development, substance, and style."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the main proposal, number the speech's three main moves in the margin, and circle one phrase that makes the speaker sound candid or respectful.

A Second Life for Backpacks

(1) Imagine reaching the bus stop with a backpack whose strap has begun to tear. You can still carry your books, but each step pulls the seam farther apart. A new bag would solve the problem, yet the damaged one may need only a few stitches. Our school should run a four-week backpack repair table during lunch, staffed by volunteers with an adult supervisor. This small pilot would give students a practical option before they discard a usable bag. It would also turn a common hallway problem into a chance to learn a useful skill.

(2) Here is how the pilot would work. On Tuesdays, students could bring bags with loose seams, missing zipper pulls, or broken buckles to a table near the cafeteria. Volunteers could sew simple seams or attach replacement pulls; they would not handle repairs that require a machine. A student would stay with the bag, describe the problem, and approve the repair. A supervisor would manage needles and decide which jobs are safe to attempt. At the end of each session, volunteers would record how many bags were repaired and how many could not be fixed, without recording students' names.

(3) Some students may wonder whether lunch is too short to finish a repair. That is a fair concern, so the table would accept only jobs a supervisor expects to take ten minutes or less. Students with larger problems could receive a list of local repair options instead. The pilot would use donated thread and spare parts, but volunteers would report any costs rather than pretend the project is free. After four weeks, the council could review the repair counts, costs, and student feedback before deciding whether to continue. Approve the pilot, then let its results guide the next vote.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does the opening backpack scene prepare listeners for the proposal that follows?

2. Choose two details from the second paragraph that show how the repair table would operate. How do they make the proposal more convincing?

3. What concern does the speaker address in the final paragraph, and what information would the council use to decide whether to continue the pilot?

4. Find a phrase that makes the speaker sound candid or respectful. Explain why that style suits a proposal to the student council.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a single 85 to 110 word speech to your student council proposing a change to lunch seating. Open with a concrete moment, state your proposal, explain two steps, address one reasonable concern, and end with a direct request in a respectful tone.

ANSWER KEY

Make Your Case

HIGH SCHOOL · 11-12.SL.4.a

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the main proposal, number the speech's three main moves in the margin, and circle one phrase that makes the speaker sound candid or respectful. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does the opening backpack scene prepare listeners for the proposal that follows?	**The torn strap gives listeners a concrete problem before the speaker proposes a repair table as a possible solution.**
2	Choose two details from the second paragraph that show how the repair table would operate. How do they make the proposal more convincing?	**The adult supervisor would manage needles, and students would approve repairs to their own bags. These details explain how the table could operate safely and with students' consent.**
3	What concern does the speaker address in the final paragraph, and what information would the council use to decide whether to continue the pilot?	**The speaker addresses whether repairs can be finished during lunch by limiting jobs to those expected to take ten minutes or less. The council would review repair counts, costs, and student feedback.**
4	Find a phrase that makes the speaker sound candid or respectful. Explain why that style suits a proposal to the student council.	**"Rather than pretend the project is free" sounds candid about costs, which helps the council assess the proposal.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

At lunch yesterday, I watched a student try to finish a book while nearby conversations grew louder. We should reserve one corner of the cafeteria for students who want a quieter lunch. For a two-week trial, post a sign at that corner and invite students to use its tables if they agree to speak softly. Afterward, collect feedback on a short paper form. Some may worry that this limits seating choices, but anyone willing to follow the quiet guideline could still sit there. Please approve the trial and review the feedback before making a permanent change.

Accept other well-supported explanations of the speech's organization and style. For Part 3, look for a distinct lunch-seating proposal with a clear sequence, workable details, a response to a concern, and a direct request.