A Measured Case

Study how a policy memo balances a clear voice with careful claims.

11-12.W.1.d "Establish and maintain a formal style and clear, engaging voice while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Circle the recommendation in paragraph 1, underline one phrase in paragraph 2 that limits a claim, and number two sentences in paragraph 3: one that raises a practical concern and one that proposes how to assess the plan.

Lighting the Walkway, Protecting the Beach

1. To the Coastal Parks Committee: A beach can appear empty after sunset while still serving as a route for sea turtle hatchlings. Newly emerged hatchlings generally move toward the brighter horizon over the ocean, but artificial lights can draw them away from the water. I recommend a seasonal lighting plan for the public walkway beside the nesting beach. The plan would turn off unnecessary fixtures during nesting and hatching season and direct essential light toward the ground. This approach protects a vulnerable passage without treating public access and conservation as opposing goals.

2. The committee should begin with a nighttime survey of each fixture visible from the beach, recording its location, purpose, and direction. Maintenance staff could then shield needed fixtures and replace unsuitable bulbs with wildlife-sensitive options where appropriate. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission advises coastal communities to keep lights low, shielded, and directed away from nesting beaches. These practices provide a sound starting point, not a guarantee that every hatchling will reach the sea. Because conditions differ among sites, staff should inspect the walkway after changes are made rather than assuming that a new bulb alone solves the problem.

3. Residents may reasonably ask whether reduced lighting will make the walkway harder to use. Instead of dismissing that concern, the committee could test the plan on one section of the path before expanding it. During the trial, staff should document which lights remain visible from the sand and collect reports from walkway users about visibility. The committee can then revise fixture placement while keeping the beach-facing side dark. A limited trial makes the recommendation accountable: it measures a practical effect and leaves room to correct unintended problems before a permanent policy is adopted.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does the opening sentence make the memo engaging while maintaining a formal style?

2. Identify two phrases in paragraph 2 that keep its claims appropriately limited. What do those phrases avoid promising?

3. Why does the memo name the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission rather than say only that experts support the plan?

4. How does paragraph 3 handle a possible objection in a way suited to a public policy memo?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 90 to 110 word memo to your principal proposing a four-week trial of a quiet library study area during lunch. Include a clear recommendation, a reason, one reasonable concern and your response to it, and a specific way to assess the trial; use formal, engaging language without inventing results.

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PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Circle the recommendation in paragraph 1, underline one phrase in paragraph 2 that limits a claim, and number two sentences in paragraph 3: one that raises a practical concern and one that proposes how to assess the plan. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does the opening sentence make the memo engaging while maintaining a formal style?	**The contrast between an apparently empty beach and its role as a hatchling route draws readers in without using casual language.**
2	Identify two phrases in paragraph 2 that keep its claims appropriately limited. What do those phrases avoid promising?	**"Where appropriate" avoids claiming that every bulb needs replacing. "Not a guarantee" avoids promising that the lighting changes will save every hatchling.**
3	Why does the memo name the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission rather than say only that experts support the plan?	**Naming the agency identifies the source of the guidance and makes the policy recommendation more credible than a vague appeal to experts.**
4	How does paragraph 3 handle a possible objection in a way suited to a public policy memo?	**It acknowledges residents' concern about walkway visibility, proposes a limited trial, and specifies observations and user reports that could guide revisions.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

To the Principal: I recommend a four-week trial of a quiet study area in one section of the library during lunch. Students who need to read or complete assignments would have a space with fewer conversations nearby. This proposal does not assume that every student wants a silent lunch; group tables would remain available elsewhere. A trial could also reveal whether the arrangement limits access to library materials. Please ask library staff to record use of the study area and invite brief student feedback at the end of each week. Those observations could guide a decision about keeping or changing the space.

Accept other passage-based examples of qualified language in question 2 if students explain the limits accurately. For the memo, look for a consistent formal voice, a concrete trial, a fair response to a concern, and an assessment method rather than invented findings.