The Last Word

How an editorial conclusion brings an argument to a close

11-12.W.3.f "Craft an effective conclusion, when appropriate to the genre."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Read the editorial. In its final paragraph, circle the image that returns from the opening, underline the proposal, and number the sentence that asks readers to act.

Let One Strip Grow

1 At the edge of our school's parking lot, a mower circles a narrow strip of grass that no one uses. The grass looks tidy for a day, then grows back, offering little shelter or food for insects. We could replace part of that strip with native wildflowers and grasses selected for our region. This is not a proposal to abandon the grounds. It is a proposal to make one overlooked space do more than sit between asphalt and a fence. A small planting could turn a routine maintenance spot into a place students actually notice.

2 Such a change would need planning, not just a bag of seeds. A biology class could research which species belong in our area, and the grounds crew could identify safe sight lines near the parking lot. Students could make signs explaining the planting and help remove weeds during scheduled workdays. Native plants can support local insects when chosen and maintained carefully, though they will not solve habitat loss by themselves. Starting with one strip would let the school test the work involved before expanding anything. That is a more responsible experiment than promising a perfect, maintenance-free garden.

3 Next spring, the mower could pass one marked strip instead of circling it. Replacing that unused grass with a carefully planned native planting would give our campus a modest chance to support insects and give students a living project to study. It would also require real upkeep, which is why a trial makes more sense than a sweeping makeover. At the next school council meeting, students should ask for approval of a one-year pilot and volunteer for its maintenance team. The strip may be small, but choosing what grows there would show what our school is willing to care for.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does the mower image in the conclusion change the way you see the strip described at the start?

2. Which benefit and which concern from the earlier paragraphs does the conclusion bring together?

3. What specific action does the conclusion ask readers to take, and why does that request fit an editorial?

4. What would the editorial lose if it ended with the school council request instead of its final sentence?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four- or five-sentence conclusion for an editorial arguing that your school should hold a student-run clothing swap once each semester. Return to an opening image of a jacket hanging unused in a closet, bring together a benefit and a practical concern, and end with a specific action for readers.

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PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Read the editorial. In its final paragraph, circle the image that returns from the opening, underline the proposal, and number the sentence that asks readers to act. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does the mower image in the conclusion change the way you see the strip described at the start?	**At first, the mower circles unused grass. In the conclusion, it passes a strip set aside for planting, making the proposed change concrete.**
2	Which benefit and which concern from the earlier paragraphs does the conclusion bring together?	**It brings together support for insects and student learning with the need for planning and upkeep.**
3	What specific action does the conclusion ask readers to take, and why does that request fit an editorial?	**It asks students to request a one-year pilot at the school council meeting and volunteer for maintenance. An editorial argues for a position and can urge readers to act on it.**
4	What would the editorial lose if it ended with the school council request instead of its final sentence?	**It would lose the broader point that a small choice about school grounds can show what the community values and will care for.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

That jacket waiting in a closet could find a new owner at a student-run clothing swap each semester. A swap would give usable clothes a second life and help students find items without paying for new ones. To keep the event orderly, organizers would need clear donation rules and volunteers to sort what arrives. Ask the student council to schedule a trial swap next semester, and sign up to help run it.

For the marking job, accept the mower in the first sentence of the final paragraph as the returning image, the native-planting proposal in the second sentence, and the school council request in the fourth. For Part 3, accept varied benefits and concerns if the conclusion returns to the jacket image and closes with a specific reader action.