Words for the Moment

Notice how a speaker changes language for different listeners.

4.L.3.c "Recognize that different situations call for formal or informal English."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline what Nia says or writes to Mateo. Circle what she says or writes to Principal Lee or the families so you can compare her word choices.

The Thirsty Beans

1. During recess, Nia spotted drooping bean plants in the school garden. She waved to her friend Mateo. "Hey, can you grab the watering can? These beans look pretty thirsty!" Mateo hurried to the shed. They filled the can, but the garden tap gave only a few drops. Nia decided to ask the school office for help before the last bell.

2. In the office, Nia said, "Good afternoon, Principal Lee. The garden tap is not working. Could you please ask someone to check it?" Principal Lee said the custodian could look at it after lunch. Back outside, Mateo asked what had happened. Nia said, "The tap's busted, but help is on the way!" Then they carried water from a nearby sink.

3. That evening, Nia wrote two messages about Saturday's garden work. In a note to families, she wrote, "Please join us at nine o'clock to water the plants and pull weeds. Thank you for your help." In a message to Mateo, she wrote, "Hey, want to meet at nine and tackle those weeds?" Nia checked both messages before sending them.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why does Nia say “Could you please ask someone to check it?” to Principal Lee instead of “The tap's busted”?

2. Find a phrase Nia says to Mateo during recess that would sound too casual in a request to the principal. What makes it casual?

3. Nia tells Mateo, “The tap's busted, but help is on the way!” Which words in that sentence would you change if she were speaking to the principal? Explain why.

4. Which of Nia's two evening messages is more formal? How can you tell?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine you need help moving chairs for a class show. Write one sentence asking your teacher and one sentence asking a close friend for the same help, using words that fit each listener.

ANSWER KEY

Words for the Moment

GRADE 4 · 4.L.3.c

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline what Nia says or writes to Mateo. Circle what she says or writes to Principal Lee or the families so you can compare her word choices. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why does Nia say "Could you please ask someone to check it?" to Principal Lee instead of "The tap's busted"?	**She is making a request to the principal, so she uses more formal and polite words. She uses "The tap's busted" when chatting with her friend.**
2	Find a phrase Nia says to Mateo during recess that would sound too casual in a request to the principal. What makes it casual?	**"Hey, can you grab the watering can?" is casual because "Hey" and "grab" sound like words Nia would use with a friend.**
3	Nia tells Mateo, "The tap's busted, but help is on the way!" Which words in that sentence would you change if she were speaking to the principal? Explain why.	**Change "busted" to "not working" because "busted" is too casual for a conversation with the principal.**
4	Which of Nia's two evening messages is more formal? How can you tell?	**The note to families is more formal. It says "Please join us" and "Thank you for your help," while the message to Mateo starts with "Hey."**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Ms. Park, could you please help me move chairs for the class show? Hey, can you help me move chairs for the show?

Accept other passage-based phrases and explanations that connect word choice to the listener. For Part 3, look for the same request expressed more formally to the teacher and more casually to the friend.