Make Your Case

Read and mark a speech written for a specific audience.

7.SL.4 "Present claims and findings appropriate to the purpose and audience. Include pertinent descriptions, facts, details, and examples. Use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation…"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the speaker's claim, circle two details that support it, and number the paragraphs 1 to 3 to show how the argument builds.

A Patch for Pollinators

1 [Stand still and look at the student council.] Imagine walking past a bare strip of dirt outside our cafeteria every day. That strip could become a small garden of plants native to our area. I am asking the student council to approve a native plant patch there. A garden would give bees and butterflies more places to find food, and it would give students a way to learn about the living things on our campus. This plan uses one existing space, not a new building.

2 Here is why the choice of plants matters. Many bees collect nectar and pollen from flowers, while butterflies drink nectar. A patch with flowers that bloom at different times could offer food across more of the growing season than a patch that blooms only once. For example, an early-blooming flower and a late-blooming flower would not feed visitors in the same weeks. We should ask a local garden group which plants are native here, because a plant that is native in one region may not be native in another.

3 [Pause, look across the room, and speak the next sentence clearly at a volume everyone can hear.] A small native plant patch can make our courtyard a better stop for pollinators. We could begin by asking the grounds staff where planting is allowed, then invite volunteers to prepare the soil and water new plants. We could put up a small sign naming the plants so other students know what they are seeing. Please approve a planning meeting with the grounds staff. One small space could become a useful place for wildlife and learning.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What does the speaker want the student council to approve? Which words make the request clear to that audience?

2. Choose two details that support the speaker's claim. How does each help make the case?

3. Which point does the speaker emphasize with a pause, eye contact, and clear, audible speech? Why is that point worth emphasizing?

4. How do the steps in the final paragraph make the speaker's request more practical?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a short speech to your principal proposing one change that would make your school easier to use during the school day. State your claim, give two specific supporting details or examples, end with a request, and include one bracketed cue for eye contact, volume, or pronunciation.

ANSWER KEY

Make Your Case

GRADE 7 · 7.SL.4

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the speaker's claim, circle two details that support it, and number the paragraphs 1 to 3 to show how the argument builds. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What does the speaker want the student council to approve? Which words make the request clear to that audience?	**The speaker wants approval for a native plant patch. The words "I am asking the student council to approve" directly address that audience.**
2	Choose two details that support the speaker's claim. How does each help make the case?	**Flowers can provide nectar or pollen for pollinators, supporting the claim that the patch could help them find food. A sign naming the plants would help students learn from the patch.**
3	Which point does the speaker emphasize with a pause, eye contact, and clear, audible speech? Why is that point worth emphasizing?	**The speaker emphasizes that a small native plant patch can make the courtyard a better stop for pollinators. It sums up the main reason for the proposal.**
4	How do the steps in the final paragraph make the speaker's request more practical?	**The speaker proposes checking with the grounds staff, recruiting volunteers, and labeling plants. Those steps show how the council could move from approval to a workable patch.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Good morning, Principal Lee. I propose adding clear labels to the trash and recycling bins in the cafeteria. Labels on both the lids and sides would be easy to see when students carry trays. A list of common cafeteria items would help us sort them without guessing. [Look up and speak clearly.] Clear labels could make lunch cleanup less confusing. Could we ask the custodial team which items our local recycling service accepts, then test new labels for one week?

Accept other passage details when students explain how they support the claim. For the speech, look for a proposal suited to the principal, two relevant details, a specific request, and a delivery cue.