A Wilder Edge

Read and annotate an argument about school grounds

9-10.RI.6.a "Analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance that point of view or purpose."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline a comparison, circle a question meant to persuade, and number two places where the writer addresses a concern or offers a practical plan. Use your marks to track how the writer builds support for a native plant border.

What Could Grow Here?

1 At lunch, the lawn beside our school looks like a green carpet rolled out for nobody. Students cross it, but few stop there: it offers neither shade nor a place to sit. What if one narrow strip became a patch of flowers and grasses native to our region? Bees and butterflies visit many flowering plants for nectar, and a patch could give them another place to feed. This is not a call to pave over our playing space. It is a chance to turn a quiet edge of campus into a living lesson, without taking the whole lawn.

2 Some people hear "wildflowers" and picture weeds taller than the windows. That picture is fair to question, but it is not the only option. A planted border can have a clear edge, a walking path, and a sign explaining what grows there. Choosing plants suited to local conditions would matter, and the first seasons would still require watering and weeding. Unlike a lawn trimmed to the same height each week, the border could change as different plants bloom. Which view teaches us more about the place where we live: a perfect green rectangle or a garden we can watch?

3 Start small: mark off a strip, ask a local nursery which native plants fit the site, and keep the rest of the lawn for games. We would need volunteers to tend the border, and the school would need to approve a plan for upkeep. That is work, not magic. But consider what the work makes possible. We could observe insects without leaving campus. We could compare what blooms in spring and fall. We could make our grounds show that learning does not stop at the classroom door. A narrow strip cannot solve every environmental problem, but it can help us notice one.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why does the writer compare the lawn to a “green carpet rolled out for nobody” instead of simply calling it empty?

2. How does the writer respond to the concern that wildflowers will look like tall weeds? Explain how that response supports the proposal.

3. What does the question at the end of paragraph 2 invite readers to value, and how does that help the writer's argument?

4. Why does the writer include specific steps and upkeep needs in paragraph 3 rather than describing only the border's benefits?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine this argument will be read to students who play games on the lawn. In four or five sentences, analyze how the repeated phrase “We could” might affect that audience, then propose a different rhetorical choice and explain why it might persuade them more.

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PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline a comparison, circle a question meant to persuade, and number two places where the writer addresses a concern or offers a practical plan. Use your marks to track how the writer builds support for a native plant border. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why does the writer compare the lawn to a "green carpet rolled out for nobody" instead of simply calling it empty?	**The comparison helps readers picture a neat but unused space, making a change to part of the lawn seem worthwhile.**
2	How does the writer respond to the concern that wildflowers will look like tall weeds? Explain how that response supports the proposal.	**The writer acknowledges the concern, then describes a defined border, path, and sign. These details make the proposed planting seem orderly and manageable.**
3	What does the question at the end of paragraph 2 invite readers to value, and how does that help the writer's argument?	**It invites readers to value learning about the local environment over a uniformly trimmed lawn, supporting the proposed border as a place to observe nature.**
4	Why does the writer include specific steps and upkeep needs in paragraph 3 rather than describing only the border's benefits?	**The steps and upkeep needs make the proposal seem practical and honest about the work required, which can build readers' trust.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The repeated "We could" makes students sound like partners in the project, rather than people receiving an order. Students who play games on the lawn, though, might hear a list of benefits that do not address their main concern. A speaker could offer a concrete example of a game continuing on the open lawn while plants grow along its edge. That example would help players picture how the proposal could leave room for both activities.

Accept other explanations that connect a specific rhetorical choice to the writer's purpose. For Your Turn, look for an audience-specific analysis and a distinct proposed choice with a plausible reason it could persuade.