Test the Case

Read a school proposal and weigh its evidence.

9-10.RI.8 "Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text. Assess whether the reasoning is valid, and the evidence is relevant and sufficient. Identify false statements and fallacious reasoning."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the main proposal and two reasons for it, circle the numbers used as evidence, and put a question mark beside a conclusion that the evidence does not justify.

Should We Install a Refill Station?

1. At our school, the student council is asking the principal to install a water-bottle refill station near the cafeteria. I support the request because it could make refilling easier and reduce the number of disposable bottles students use. Last Thursday, council members counted 92 disposable water bottles in cafeteria trash cans after lunch. They also counted 28 students carrying reusable bottles into the cafeteria. Those numbers show that disposable bottles are common at one lunch, but they do not show how many bottles a refill station would prevent. Still, a convenient place to refill might encourage students to bring reusable bottles.

2. A refill station would also save the school money immediately, or so the council's flyer claims. The flyer lists an installation price of $1,800 and says the school spends about $160 a month on bottled water for events. Over ten school months, that is $1,600, even if the station somehow replaced every event bottle. The flyer does not estimate maintenance costs or explain whether event guests would bring reusable bottles. Its first-year savings claim does not follow from its own numbers. The station might save money in later years, but we would need better estimates to know.

3. Some council members make a more dramatic claim: 'Without a refill station, students have no place to get drinking water.' That statement is false because a working fountain stands outside the cafeteria. During a meeting, ten of twelve students who spoke favored the new station. One council member called this proof that everyone at school wants it. Twelve speakers cannot represent every student, especially when students who disagree may not have attended. I would still vote for the station as a trial, but I would track bottle waste for several weeks before and after installation rather than promise results we cannot yet verify.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What is the writer's main proposal? Give one piece of relevant evidence the writer uses to support it.

2. Why are the counts from one lunch not sufficient to show that a refill station would reduce bottle waste?

3. Does the flyer's first-year savings claim follow from its numbers? Use the costs in the passage to explain.

4. Identify one statement the passage shows is false and one conclusion based on faulty reasoning. Explain each problem.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

A student argues, 'The library was crowded at lunch on Tuesday, so it must stay open until 7 p.m. every day.' In three or four sentences, evaluate the reasoning and name one specific piece of evidence that would strengthen the argument.

ANSWER KEY

Test the Case

HIGH SCHOOL · 9-10.RI.8

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the main proposal and two reasons for it, circle the numbers used as evidence, and put a question mark beside a conclusion that the evidence does not justify. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What is the writer's main proposal? Give one piece of relevant evidence the writer uses to support it.	**Install a refill station near the cafeteria. Council members counted 92 disposable water bottles in cafeteria trash cans after one lunch, evidence that disposable bottles are used there.**
2	Why are the counts from one lunch not sufficient to show that a refill station would reduce bottle waste?	**The counts cover only one lunch and do not show whether students would change their habits if a station were installed.**
3	Does the flyer's first-year savings claim follow from its numbers? Use the costs in the passage to explain.	**No. Ten months of bottled water cost $1,600, which is $200 less than the $1,800 installation price. That is before maintenance costs, even if every event bottle were replaced.**
4	Identify one statement the passage shows is false and one conclusion based on faulty reasoning. Explain each problem.	**The claim that students have no place to get drinking water is false because there is a working fountain. The claim that everyone wants a station does not follow from the views of twelve meeting speakers.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

A crowded library at one lunch shows demand at that time, not demand after school every day. The proposed hours might help some students, but the evidence does not establish that the library needs to stay open until 7 p.m. A count of students trying to use the library after its current closing time on several days would strengthen the argument.

Accept other accurate explanations of why one lunch count or twelve meeting speakers cannot support a broader conclusion. For Your Turn, look for an evaluation of the gap between lunchtime crowding and evening demand, plus specific additional evidence.