Words That Measure

Precise language for practical explanations

9-10.WHST.2.d "Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to manage the complexity of the topic. Establish a clear voice."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one technical term in each paragraph and circle one phrase in each paragraph that limits or clarifies a claim, so you can see how the writer establishes a measured voice.

A Cooler Place to Wait

1 At noon, two students wait for a bus on opposite sides of the same street. One stands beneath a tree; the other stands beside a dark asphalt parking lot. The difference they feel is not proof that the air temperature changes at the curb. Sunlight warms exposed pavement, and that pavement transfers heat to nearby people and air. Urban areas often have more heat-absorbing surfaces and less vegetation than surrounding rural areas, a pattern called the urban heat island effect. To explain a hot bus stop accurately, distinguish the temperature of a surface from the temperature of the air above it.

2 Shade offers one direct way to reduce heat exposure. A tree canopy blocks some sunlight before it reaches pavement or skin, so shaded surfaces can stay cooler than exposed ones. Trees can also cool nearby air through transpiration, the release of water vapor from leaves. These mechanisms are related but not identical: shade changes how much solar energy reaches a surface, while transpiration moves water into the atmosphere. A bus stop cannot rely on trees alone. Young trees take time to grow, and roots need room and water. In a narrow sidewalk, planting may require a redesign rather than a quick fix.

3 Another option is a shelter with a light-colored roof. Its high reflectivity means it sends more incoming sunlight away instead of absorbing it, which can help keep the roof cooler. Yet a cooler roof does not automatically cool every person waiting beneath it. The shelter's shape determines where shade falls, and reflected light can create glare for people nearby. A practical proposal should therefore specify the goal: reducing direct sun on riders during the hours buses arrive. It should also separate a predicted benefit from a measured result. That careful distinction makes a recommendation more useful than a promise to "fix the heat."

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why does the writer distinguish surface temperature from air temperature in the first paragraph?

2. How do the terms “shade” and “transpiration” help the writer explain two different ways trees affect heat?

3. Find one phrase in the third paragraph that limits a claim about the shelter roof. How does it affect the writer's voice?

4. What specific goal does the writer recommend instead of promising to “fix the heat”? Why is that wording more useful?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Your school cafeteria is considering a bottle-refill station to reduce disposable cups. Write four or five sentences proposing it: use at least two precise terms, explain how it could reduce cup use, and identify one practical constraint without claiming an unmeasured result.

ANSWER KEY

Words That Measure

HIGH SCHOOL · 9-10.WHST.2.d

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one technical term in each paragraph and circle one phrase in each paragraph that limits or clarifies a claim, so you can see how the writer establishes a measured voice. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why does the writer distinguish surface temperature from air temperature in the first paragraph?	**Feeling hotter beside pavement does not prove the air temperature changes at the curb. Naming the two temperatures prevents an unsupported claim.**
2	How do the terms “shade” and “transpiration” help the writer explain two different ways trees affect heat?	**Shade reduces the sunlight reaching a surface or person. Transpiration releases water vapor from leaves and can cool nearby air.**
3	Find one phrase in the third paragraph that limits a claim about the shelter roof. How does it affect the writer's voice?	**“Does not automatically cool every person waiting beneath it” acknowledges a limit, giving the explanation a measured voice.**
4	What specific goal does the writer recommend instead of promising to “fix the heat”? Why is that wording more useful?	**The goal is reducing direct sun on riders during the hours buses arrive. It identifies whom the proposal serves and when.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

A bottle-refill station could reduce demand for disposable cups by making reusable bottles easier to fill. Its bottle-filling spout would let students refill a container instead of taking a new cup each time. The plan depends on students having clean bottles and on staff maintaining the station. The school should compare cup orders before and after installation rather than claim the station has already eliminated waste.

Accept other relevant technical terms and limiting phrases when students explain their effects accurately. For Part 3, look for a clear proposal, precise vocabulary, a plausible mechanism, and a stated constraint.