

Words or Weaknesses

Separate persuasive language from faulty reasoning.

6.9.G “explain the differences between rhetorical devices and logical fallacies.”

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB In paragraphs 2 and 3, underline the two quoted statements that use language to make an idea memorable. Circle the two quoted statements with a gap in reasoning, then write D for rhetorical device or F for logical fallacy beside each mark.

A Refill Station Debate

- ① When people try to persuade an audience, they may use language choices that make a message vivid or memorable. These choices are called rhetorical devices. For example, a speaker might repeat a key phrase or ask a question that does not need an answer. Devices can support a claim, but they do not prove it. A logical fallacy is different. It is a mistake in reasoning, such as saying a plan must be right because everyone likes it, or pretending there are only two choices when more choices exist.
- ② At Pine Ridge Middle School, students are discussing a proposal for a water-refill station near the gym. The group will present its idea to the principal next week. They want to reduce plastic waste near the gym. One student says, “Why should athletes carry heavy plastic bottles when they could refill a reusable one?” Another says, “Everyone at Pine Ridge wants the station, so the school board must approve it.” A student brings evidence: the school sold 1,200 single-use water bottles last semester. That number can help listeners judge whether the station might reduce trash.
- ③ Later, a speaker says, “Refill, reuse, reduce waste.” The room becomes quiet as students listen. A second speaker adds, “We either install this station today or we do not care about student health.” The school discussion shows why listeners should examine both language and reasoning when they hear claims. A rhetorical device shapes how words sound or feel. A fallacy tries to make a claim seem proven even though its reasoning has a serious logical gap.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

- 1** What fact in paragraph 2 is evidence for the refill-station proposal? Explain how the fact could help listeners evaluate the proposal.

- 2** Why is “Why should athletes carry heavy plastic bottles when they could refill a reusable one?” a rhetorical device instead of proof?

- 3** Why is “Everyone at Pine Ridge wants the station, so the school board must approve it” a logical fallacy?

- 4** What logical fallacy appears in “We either install this station today or we do not care about student health”? Explain the gap in reasoning.

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write two persuasive sentences about adding shade trees to the playground. In the first sentence, use a rhetorical device. In the second sentence, intentionally use a logical fallacy, then label each sentence Device or Fallacy and add a short phrase explaining how it works.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

In paragraphs 2 and 3, underline the two quoted statements that use language to make an idea memorable. Circle the two quoted statements with a gap in reasoning, then write D for rhetorical device or F for logical fallacy beside each mark. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What fact in paragraph 2 is evidence for the refill-station proposal? Explain how the fact could help listeners evaluate the proposal.	The school sold 1,200 single-use water bottles last semester. This measurable fact helps listeners judge whether a refill station could reduce bottle waste.
2	Why is “Why should athletes carry heavy plastic bottles when they could refill a reusable one?” a rhetorical device instead of proof?	It is a rhetorical question. It makes listeners think about carrying bottles, but it does not provide evidence that proves the proposal.
3	Why is “Everyone at Pine Ridge wants the station, so the school board must approve it” a logical fallacy?	It is an appeal to popularity, or bandwagon fallacy. Even if many people want the station, that alone does not prove the board must approve it.
4	What logical fallacy appears in “We either install this station today or we do not care about student health”? Explain the gap in reasoning.	It is a false dilemma. It ignores other choices, such as installing the station later or supporting student health in another way.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Device: Who wants to play on a hot blacktop with no shade? Explanation: rhetorical question, makes listeners imagine the heat. Fallacy: Every kid wants shade trees, so the principal must buy them. Explanation: popularity does not prove the plan must happen.