

Claims Under Scrutiny

Analyze how writers shape an audience's response.

8.9.G "explain the purpose of rhetorical devices such as analogy and juxtaposition and of logical fallacies such as bandwagon appeals and circular reasoning."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the analogy, box the juxtaposition, circle the claim based on popularity, and number the claim that repeats itself as its own reason. Your marks will help you explain how each choice works.

A Garden Proposal

- ① At a town meeting, eighth grader Lena asks the council to turn an unused lot beside the library into a community garden. She describes tomato plants, bean poles, and a path wide enough for wheelchairs. "Our neighborhood needs a place where people can grow food and meet one another," she says. "A garden can be a classroom without walls, where children learn by touching soil and watching seeds change." Lena adds that nearby families could share extra vegetables with the food pantry.
- ② Then Lena points to two places on the same block. On one side, the library entrance is bright, busy, and lined with planters. On the other, the fenced lot holds cracked concrete, windblown wrappers, and weeds pushing through the ground. She says the garden would not erase every problem in the neighborhood, but it would give residents a useful shared space. Her plan includes rain barrels, compost bins, and a schedule for volunteers to water the plants during dry weeks.
- ③ During the public-comment period, a supporter says, "Everyone in our town wants this garden, so the council should approve it." Another speaker insists, "The garden plan is the best plan because it is better than every other plan." Lena does not repeat either claim. Instead, she returns to details about access, food, and care for the space. The council members must decide which statements give useful reasons and which statements only sound convincing at first.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What does Lena suggest by saying that a garden can be “a classroom without walls”? Explain how this comparison could support her proposal.

2 How do the descriptions of the library entrance and the fenced lot work together? What idea does this contrast emphasize?

3 Which statement uses a bandwagon appeal? Why does that statement fail to give the council a strong reason to approve the garden?

4 Which statement uses circular reasoning? Explain why its reasoning is circular.

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write exactly eight sentences proposing a different improvement for your school or community. Use an analogy in sentence 2 and explain its purpose in sentence 3, use a juxtaposition in sentence 4 and explain its purpose in sentence 5, write a bandwagon appeal in sentence 6, write circular reasoning in sentence 7, and explain why both claims are weak in sentence 8.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline the analogy, box the juxtaposition, circle the claim based on popularity, and number the claim that repeats itself as its own reason. Your marks will help you explain how each choice works. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What does Lena suggest by saying that a garden can be “a classroom without walls”? Explain how this comparison could support her proposal.	She suggests that people can learn through hands-on work in the garden. The comparison helps the audience see the garden as an educational space.
2	How do the descriptions of the library entrance and the fenced lot work together? What idea does this contrast emphasize?	The descriptions place an attractive, cared-for entrance beside a neglected lot. The contrast emphasizes that the lot could be improved into a useful community space.
3	Which statement uses a bandwagon appeal? Why does that statement fail to give the council a strong reason to approve the garden?	“Everyone in our town wants this garden, so the council should approve it.” It relies on supposed popularity instead of evidence about why the garden would be useful or workable.
4	Which statement uses circular reasoning? Explain why its reasoning is circular.	“The garden plan is the best plan because it is better than every other plan.” It repeats the claim that the plan is best without giving an independent reason or evidence.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Our school should install a water-bottle filling station near the gym. A filling station would be a refueling stop for students, like a pit stop for runners. This comparison shows that quick access to water can help students prepare for class and practice. Now, students crowd around one old fountain, but a filling station could serve several students quickly. This contrast highlights the difference between the current delay and the proposed improvement. Every student supports the station, so the principal must buy one. The station is necessary because it is needed. The last two claims are weak because one relies on popularity and the other gives no reason beyond the claim.

Accept accurate paraphrases of the quoted statements and explanations that identify the comparison, contrast, popularity appeal, and self-supporting claim. For the open response, accept varied topics when the student follows the eight-sentence structure and correctly explains the two fallacies.