

Speak to Decision Makers

Analyze how a speaker matches language and tone to an audience.

12.C.2.A.ii "Report orally on a topic or text or present an opinion. This includes: Choosing appropriate vocabulary, language, and tone for a selected topic, purpose, context, and audience when speaking and presenting."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline words and phrases that make the speech sound respectful and evidence-based. Circle clues that show the speaker's audience or purpose, then number three places where the speaker adjusts language for that audience.

A Plaza Proposal

- ① Good evening, Council Members and neighbors. I am speaking in support of converting the vacant lot on Pine Street into a shaded public plaza. On summer afternoons, the block has little tree cover, and pedestrians wait for buses beside hot pavement. A plaza with trees, benches, and a drinking fountain would give residents a safer, cooler place to rest. I know the council must weigh costs, maintenance, and other projects. My goal is not to dismiss those concerns, but to show that a modest investment can improve a daily experience shared by students, workers, older adults, and families.
- ② Because I am addressing officials who allocate public funds, I will use clear, specific language rather than slogans. For example, I will describe the proposal as a "\$180,000 capital project" and explain that its annual upkeep could be included in the parks department's existing schedule. I will avoid claiming that the plaza will solve every neighborhood problem. Instead, I will cite a realistic benefit: shade can lower surface temperatures and make a bus stop more comfortable. This measured tone respects the audience's responsibility to examine evidence, compare needs, and make decisions that affect the whole city.
- ③ At the end, I will ask the council to direct staff members to study the site, estimate costs, and return with options at a public meeting. This request is purposeful but not demanding. Saying "Approve this now" would sound impatient and would ignore the council's process. Saying "Could you direct staff to prepare options for review?" invites action while recognizing that elected officials need information before voting. If I were speaking to teenagers at a school assembly, I might use different language, such as asking them to share ideas for the plaza's design. Effective speakers adjust both word choice and tone as the audience and setting change.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 Who is the speaker's main audience? Give one detail from the passage that shows why the speaker chose that audience.

2 Why does the speaker call the proposal a "\$180,000 capital project" instead of using a slogan?

3 How would the statement "Approve this now" affect the speaker's tone? Why is the replacement request more appropriate?

4 How might the speaker change the language for teenagers at a school assembly?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write a 90- to 110-word oral statement to your school principal proposing one change at school. Use one specific detail, a respectful and measured tone, and a clear request that fits the principal's role.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline words and phrases that make the speech sound respectful and evidence-based. Circle clues that show the speaker's audience or purpose, then number three places where the speaker adjusts language for that audience. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Who is the speaker's main audience? Give one detail from the passage that shows why the speaker chose that audience.	The main audience is city council members or other public officials. The speaker addresses "Council Members" and discusses public funds, costs, and voting.
2	Why does the speaker call the proposal a "\$180,000 capital project" instead of using a slogan?	The specific term and cost give officials practical financial information and support an evidence-based, professional tone.
3	How would the statement "Approve this now" affect the speaker's tone? Why is the replacement request more appropriate?	It would sound impatient and dismissive of the council's process. The replacement politely requests action while allowing officials to review information.
4	How might the speaker change the language for teenagers at a school assembly?	The speaker might ask teenagers to share ideas for the plaza's design, using language that invites their participation.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Good afternoon, Principal Rivera. I am asking you to consider extending the library's weekday hours until 5:00 p.m. twice each week. Many students who ride late buses or wait for family members need a quiet place to finish research, print assignments, or meet with project partners. I understand that staffing and building security require planning, so I am not asking for an immediate daily schedule. Could you ask the library staff to review attendance data and estimate the cost of a six-week trial? That information would help the school decide whether longer hours would serve students responsibly.

Accept answers that accurately connect the speaker's vocabulary and tone to city officials as an audience. For the oral statement, accept varied proposals if the response meets the word count and uses specific, respectful language and an appropriate request.