Beyond the Fine

Read a policy argument and test its claims.

8.CL.2 "Make complex inferences from the structure and content of a text, including comparison and contrast, problem and solution, cause and effect, and substantiated and unsubstantiated claims and evidence…"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the problem the writer wants to solve, circle two proposed solutions, and number one claim that has support and one claim that lacks support. Use your marks to decide what the writer values most.

What Should a Late Book Cost?

1 On Monday, our school library displayed a new sign: "Late books cost 25 cents a day." The rule aims to bring books back quickly so other readers can borrow them. That goal matters. Yet a student who owes money may keep a late book longer because returning it means facing a bill. A late fee can turn one missed deadline into a reason to avoid the library. If we want more books back on shelves, charging for every late day may work against us.

2 Some students propose erasing every fee, even when a book is lost. That sounds simple, but a lost book cannot reach the next reader. A better plan is to drop daily late fees while keeping charges for books that are never returned. The library could send reminders and allow renewals when nobody is waiting. Unlike a fee, a reminder tells a student what to do without adding to a debt. A replacement charge has a different purpose: it helps the library buy a copy when the original is gone.

3 Critics warn that without late fees, "no one will return anything." That prediction offers no evidence and ignores students who already return books because others need them. Still, we should not pretend reminders will solve every delay. If a title has a waiting list, the library could shorten its loan period and contact the borrower before the due date. First remove the penalty that may discourage returns; then check whether more books actually come back. A policy should be judged by returned books, not by the money it collects.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does the writer contrast a late fee with a reminder? What does that contrast suggest about the writer's goal?

2. Why does the writer support ending daily late fees but keeping replacement charges?

3. Why is the critics' prediction that "no one will return anything" unsubstantiated? How does the writer avoid making a similarly certain claim about reminders?

4. How does the final sentence change the way readers might judge the library rule? What does it reveal about the writer's perspective?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine the school considers removing replacement charges too. Write 4 to 5 sentences arguing whether that change fits the writer's perspective. Compare late fees with replacement charges, use two details from the passage, and identify one claim about the new policy that would need more evidence.

ANSWER KEY

Beyond the Fine

GRADE 8 · 8.CL.2

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the problem the writer wants to solve, circle two proposed solutions, and number one claim that has support and one claim that lacks support. Use your marks to decide what the writer values most. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does the writer contrast a late fee with a reminder? What does that contrast suggest about the writer's goal?	**A late fee adds a debt that may discourage a student from returning a book. A reminder tells the student what to do without adding debt. The writer wants more books returned, not more money collected.**
2	Why does the writer support ending daily late fees but keeping replacement charges?	**The writer argues that late fees may make students avoid returning books, while replacement charges help the library buy copies of books that never come back.**
3	Why is the critics' prediction that "no one will return anything" unsubstantiated? How does the writer avoid making a similarly certain claim about reminders?	**The critics give no evidence for their absolute prediction. The writer admits reminders may not solve every delay and proposes checking whether more books come back.**
4	How does the final sentence change the way readers might judge the library rule? What does it reveal about the writer's perspective?	**It shifts the measure of success from money collected to books returned. The writer values access to books over collecting penalties.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Removing replacement charges would not fit the writer's approach. A daily late fee may make students avoid returning a book, while a replacement charge helps buy a copy when the original is gone. The writer also suggests reminders and renewals when nobody is waiting, showing a preference for ways to get books back. Someone might claim that removing replacement charges would help recover lost books, but the passage gives no evidence for that prediction. The school should check what happens to its collection before making that change.

Accept different conclusions in Part 3 if students accurately compare the charges, use two passage details, and identify a claim that needs evidence. In Part 1, supported claims may rely on the passage's explanation of how a policy works, not on measured results.