Patterns in Line

How observations can lead to useful changes

SS24.S.2b "Explain the usefulness of discerning and sharing insights into human behavior of individuals and groups.*"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one detail about Maya, circle two details that show a group pattern, and write 1 beside a sentence showing how sharing an insight led to a change.

A Closer Look at the Lunch Line

1. At a high school cafeteria, the line for hot lunch stretched past the door each Friday. A student council team watched for three Fridays rather than guessing why. They noticed that many students paused at the menu board just before the serving counter, while others waited behind them. One student, Maya, stepped aside to read the board and then joined the line again. The team did not know Maya's reason, and her choice could not explain everyone's behavior. Still, repeated pauses at the same spot suggested that the line's layout, not simply slow students, might be part of the problem.

2. When a team member asked Maya about her pause, she said she needed a moment to check which meal fit her budget. Several other students said they struggled to see the prices until they reached the counter. Their reports did not prove every student stopped for the same reason. Together with the repeated pauses, however, the reports gave the team a stronger explanation for the crowding. Understanding both one person's choice and a pattern across the group mattered: a change aimed only at Maya would leave the crowded line untouched.

3. At a council meeting, the team shared a summary of the pattern and the students' comments without naming anyone or reporting Maya's budget. They suggested putting a second menu with prices near the entrance, where students could choose before joining the line. The cafeteria staff tried it the following Friday. Fewer students paused near the counter, although the team could not tell whether the menu was the only cause. Sharing the insight made a low-cost change possible, and leaving out personal details protected students while still giving staff useful evidence.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why would knowing Maya's reason for pausing be useful but not enough to explain the whole line?

2. How did the team's observations and the other students' reports strengthen its explanation for the crowding?

3. What change became possible when the team shared its insight with cafeteria staff, and how might that change help?

4. Why could the team leave out Maya's name and budget when sharing its insight?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

In four sentences, invent a different public setting and describe one person's behavior and a group pattern you might notice there. Offer a possible explanation, then tell whom you would share the insight with and how sharing it could help without exposing the person.

ANSWER KEY

Patterns in Line

HIGH SCHOOL · SS24.S.2b

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one detail about Maya, circle two details that show a group pattern, and write 1 beside a sentence showing how sharing an insight led to a change. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why would knowing Maya's reason for pausing be useful but not enough to explain the whole line?	**Her answer showed that checking prices could cause a pause, but her reason could not establish why every student paused.**
2	How did the team's observations and the other students' reports strengthen its explanation for the crowding?	**The team repeatedly saw students pause near the counter, and several students said they could not see prices until they got there. Together, these details suggested that the menu's location contributed to crowding.**
3	What change became possible when the team shared its insight with cafeteria staff, and how might that change help?	**Staff tried a second menu with prices near the entrance so students could choose before joining the line and fewer might pause near the counter.**
4	Why could the team leave out Maya's name and budget when sharing its insight?	**Staff could use the group pattern and students' comments to consider a change without receiving Maya's personal information.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

At a neighborhood library, one visitor reread the printer sign, and several others waited beside the printer without using it. Perhaps the instructions were hard to follow, although the visitors could have had other reasons. I would tell library staff that several visitors seemed unsure how to start printing, without naming anyone. Staff could post clearer instructions and watch whether the waiting area becomes less crowded.

Accept explanations that distinguish an individual's behavior from a group pattern and avoid treating a possible cause as certain. For Part 3, look for a useful audience or action and a way to share the insight without identifying the person.