Who Leads Cleanup?

Compare why leaders are followed and how they lead

SS24.S.8b "Differentiate among Weber's three types of authority (charismatic, rational-legal, and traditional) in respect to source of power and leadership style.*"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline why people accept each leader, circle what each leader does, and number the three types of authority. Use your marks to compare the leaders.

Three Leaders at the Park

1. After heavy rain, a creek floods a town park. Neighbors arrive to clear mud from the paths. Mara has no official position, but people trust her because she speaks with conviction and makes the work feel possible. She tells a story about children returning to the park, then persuades volunteers to form small teams. Sociologist Max Weber called this **charismatic authority**: followers accept a leader because they believe in that person's exceptional qualities. Mara leads by rallying people around a shared goal. If the neighbors stop trusting her, her claim to lead may fade.

2. The next morning, the park's longtime volunteer group arrives. For decades, its members have asked the oldest active member to direct cleanup days. This year that person is Mr. Bell. Volunteers follow his directions because the group has long treated this role as the proper way to choose a leader, not because he won an election or made a stirring speech. Weber called this **traditional authority**: people accept a leader through established custom. Mr. Bell follows familiar routines, assigning neighbors to the same sections they clean each spring. His authority depends on people continuing to honor the custom.

3. Later, the town's parks department sends its coordinator, Imani. A written town policy gives the coordinator power to close unsafe areas and assign repair crews. Imani checks the safety rules, posts a closure notice, and schedules the crews. Residents may admire Imani, but the authority belongs to the office, not to Imani's personality or the group's old custom. Weber called this **rational-legal authority**: people accept decisions because rules grant powers to an office. Such leaders generally work through formal procedures. One person can inspire others and hold an official post, but those are different sources of authority.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why do neighbors accept Mara's leadership, while group members accept Mr. Bell's?

2. How does Mara's way of leading differ from Imani's?

3. What gives Mr. Bell and Imani their authority? Explain how each source affects a decision described in the passage.

4. Suppose Imani gives a speech that inspires more volunteers. Why would Imani's power to close unsafe areas still be rational-legal? What other type of authority might the speech build?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine students organizing a school food drive. In six sentences, describe three different leaders, one for each type of authority. For each leader, explain why students accept that person's leadership and how that person directs the work.

ANSWER KEY

Who Leads Cleanup?

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline why people accept each leader, circle what each leader does, and number the three types of authority. Use your marks to compare the leaders. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why do neighbors accept Mara's leadership, while group members accept Mr. Bell's?	**Neighbors believe in Mara's exceptional qualities. Group members follow Mr. Bell because a longstanding custom gives the oldest active member the role.**
2	How does Mara's way of leading differ from Imani's?	**Mara rallies volunteers with a story and a shared goal. Imani uses safety rules and formal procedures to close areas and schedule crews.**
3	What gives Mr. Bell and Imani their authority? Explain how each source affects a decision described in the passage.	**Custom gives Mr. Bell authority, and he follows the group's familiar cleanup routine. Written town policy gives Imani authority, and Imani uses safety rules to close unsafe areas.**
4	Suppose Imani gives a speech that inspires more volunteers. Why would Imani's power to close unsafe areas still be rational-legal? What other type of authority might the speech build?	**Written town policy, not the speech, grants the coordinator power to close areas. The speech might also build charismatic authority if volunteers come to believe in Imani's exceptional qualities.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Students follow Nia because her hopeful speeches about helping local families make them believe they can fill the pantry. She energizes volunteers by telling stories and inviting them to recruit friends. Each year, the longest-serving food drive volunteer leads the collection effort, so students accept Leo's leadership through a familiar custom. Leo follows the usual routine and assigns students to their customary pickup routes. Under written student council rules, elected treasurer Ana has authority to approve spending for the drive. Ana checks the budget and authorizes supply purchases using those rules.

Accept other accurate contrasts supported by the passage. In Part 3, each leader needs a distinct source of authority and a matching way of leading.