

Speak Up, Act Wisely

Examine how citizens use rights and responsibilities to shape public decisions.

SS.8.CG.2 "Evaluate the roles, rights, and responsibilities of U.S. citizens and determine methods of active participation in society, government, and the political system."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each right, circle each responsibility, and number every method of active participation in the passage. Use your marks to compare how citizens can influence public decisions.

A Bus Route Decision

- ① When the city proposed changing bus routes, students at Lincoln Middle School saw that public decisions can affect daily life. U.S. citizens have rights that protect their participation, including the right to express an opinion, gather peacefully, and petition government officials. These rights let people raise concerns without promising that leaders must agree. Citizens also have responsibilities. They should learn reliable facts, listen to people with different views, and follow laws while sharing their ideas.
- ② Before the council meeting, Maya compared the city's route proposal with information from riders and the transit department. She then wrote a respectful email to her council member, explaining how an earlier bus could help students reach school on time. At the meeting, she listened to speakers who supported the change and speakers who opposed it. Maya did not vote in the city election because she was not yet eligible, but she could still participate by speaking, writing, volunteering, or discussing issues with adults who vote.
- ③ After hearing public comments, the council delayed its decision and asked the transit department to study costs and rider needs. This shows why active citizenship includes more than one action. A person might contact an official to share evidence, join a neighborhood group, volunteer for a campaign, or vote when eligible. Each method has a different role. Voting selects representatives, while contacting officials can influence a specific decision. Responsible participants use respectful language, check claims, and stay involved even when a decision does not go their way.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 Why do the rights to express an opinion and petition government officials matter when citizens disagree with a public decision?

2 Explain how two of Maya's actions show responsible participation.

3 Maya cannot vote yet. Identify two ways she can still participate in society or government.

4 How is voting different from contacting an official about a specific issue?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Choose a local or school issue that matters to you. Write four sentences explaining the issue, one action you would take, the right that supports your action, and one responsibility you would follow while participating.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline each right, circle each responsibility, and number every method of active participation in the passage. Use your marks to compare how citizens can influence public decisions. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why do the rights to express an opinion and petition government officials matter when citizens disagree with a public decision?	They allow people to raise concerns and share their views with government officials, even though leaders are not required to agree.
2	Explain how two of Maya's actions show responsible participation.	She compared the proposal with information from riders and the transit department, wrote a respectful email, and listened to people with different views. Any two actions with an explanation are acceptable.
3	Maya cannot vote yet. Identify two ways she can still participate in society or government.	She can speak at meetings, write to officials, volunteer, or discuss issues with adults who vote. Any two are acceptable.
4	How is voting different from contacting an official about a specific issue?	Voting selects representatives. Contacting an official can influence a specific decision.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Our town should add a protected crosswalk near the library. I would gather information about traffic and ask library visitors about their experiences. Then I would petition the city council and speak respectfully at a public meeting, using my right to express an opinion. I would listen to opposing views and check my claims because responsible participation helps officials make informed decisions.

Accept reasonable local or school issues and an active participation method that fits the issue. The response should name or clearly describe a participation right and include a responsibility such as using reliable information, listening to others, following laws, or speaking respectfully.