

Voices Into Action

Compare ways citizens can influence government in African countries.

SS7CG1 "Compare and contrast different forms of citizen participation in government."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each form of citizen participation, circle one detail that explains how it works, and number the sentences that compare one form with another.

Ways Voices Reach Government

- ① Across Africa, citizens use several paths to influence government. In Ghana, eligible voters can cast secret ballots in national and local elections. Voting lets many people choose leaders on one day, and each ballot is counted with others. A voter may support a candidate who promises safer roads or better schools. However, voters usually communicate only their choice of candidate or referendum answer. They do not get time to explain every concern directly to officials at the polling place.
- ② Citizens can also speak to decision makers between elections. In Kenya, a county government may invite residents to a public participation meeting before approving a budget or development plan. At the meeting, a resident can ask questions, give reasons, and suggest changes. Like voting, this method allows citizens to affect public decisions. Unlike voting, it is usually a smaller group and gives participants a chance to discuss one specific proposal. Officials still make the final government decision after considering the comments.
- ③ Another form of participation is joining with others through a community group, petition, or peaceful demonstration. In South Africa, citizens have used petitions and marches to call attention to issues such as housing, services, or public safety. A petition collects names to show shared support, while a march makes an issue visible in a public place. Both can pressure leaders to listen, but neither automatically changes a law. These actions differ from a meeting because citizens may address a broad issue together instead of discussing a single official plan.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 How are voting and attending a public participation meeting alike?

2 How does what a citizen communicates in a vote differ from what a citizen can communicate at a public participation meeting?

3 What is one difference between a petition and a march?

4 How does a public participation meeting differ from a petition or march in the kind of issue citizens discuss?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Choose a fictional problem in a community, such as unsafe streets or a need for clean water. Write four sentences comparing two forms of participation from the passage, including one similarity, one difference, and which form would be more useful for the problem.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline each form of citizen participation, circle one detail that explains how it works, and number the sentences that compare one form with another. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How are voting and attending a public participation meeting alike?	Both allow citizens to affect public decisions.
2	How does what a citizen communicates in a vote differ from what a citizen can communicate at a public participation meeting?	In a vote, a citizen communicates a choice of candidate or referendum answer. At a meeting, a citizen can ask questions, give reasons, and suggest changes to a proposal.
3	What is one difference between a petition and a march?	A petition collects names to show shared support, while a march makes an issue visible in a public place.
4	How does a public participation meeting differ from a petition or march in the kind of issue citizens discuss?	A meeting usually lets citizens discuss one specific official proposal. A petition or march may address a broad issue together.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

For a problem at a town bus stop, residents could vote for a candidate who supports better lighting and attend a public participation meeting about a safety plan. Both actions could influence government decisions. Voting selects a leader, while the meeting lets residents explain why lighting is needed and suggest details. The meeting would be more useful for this specific problem because residents could discuss the plan directly.

Accept equivalent comparisons that match the passage. For the open response, accept any realistic fictional issue and two participation forms, as long as the student accurately states a similarity, a difference, and a supported choice.