The Fare Debate

Weigh evidence behind a local economic decision

6-9.WG.3.4 "Analyze current economic issues using a variety of sources representing multiple perspectives."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Circle each source, underline a claim or concern from that source, and write a number beside one limit of the evidence. These marks will help you compare perspectives before deciding what the council should do.

Should Bus Rides Be Free?

1. In the fictional town of Harbor Bend, the council is deciding whether to make bus rides free next year. A transit department budget note says fares pay part of the cost of fuel, repairs, and drivers. The note warns that removing fares without new funding could mean fewer trips. It also says collecting fares requires machines and staff time. The note comes from the agency that runs the buses, so it has direct cost records. Yet it does not show how a fare change would affect riders' jobs or shopping.

2. A rider group interviewed 24 people at two bus stops during the morning commute. Several riders said free trips would help them get to work and keep more money for food. The group's summary calls for free rides, but its interviews leave out people who travel at other times or do not use the bus. A shop owner told the local paper that easier travel might bring more customers downtown. She also worried that a sales tax to pay for free rides could make purchases more expensive for customers.

3. A bus drivers' union statement supports more funding, whether fares stay or go. It argues that crowded buses and missed trips hurt riders and workers. Unlike the rider interviews, the statement focuses on service and working conditions, but the union represents employees, not every taxpayer. Together, these sources show a tradeoff: free rides could lower travel costs for riders, while someone must pay to keep buses running. Before voting, the council could ask for estimates of tax costs and how many extra trips free rides might create.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How do the transit department note and the rider group's summary focus on different costs?

2. Why might the rider group's interviews give the council an incomplete picture?

3. What concern does the shop owner raise that the bus drivers' union statement does not focus on?

4. What two estimates could help the council weigh the benefits and costs of free rides? Explain why each would help.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write four sentences advising the council on a small test or another next step before it decides. Use two different sources, explain how their priorities differ, and name one limit of the evidence.

ANSWER KEY

The Fare Debate

GRADES 6-9 · 6-9.WG.3.4

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Circle each source, underline a claim or concern from that source, and write a number beside one limit of the evidence. These marks will help you compare perspectives before deciding what the council should do. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How do the transit department note and the rider group's summary focus on different costs?	**The department focuses on the money needed to run buses. The rider group focuses on what fares cost riders who need money for food and travel to work.**
2	Why might the rider group's interviews give the council an incomplete picture?	**The group interviewed only 24 people at two stops during the morning commute, leaving out other travelers and people who do not ride.**
3	What concern does the shop owner raise that the bus drivers' union statement does not focus on?	**The owner worries that a sales tax could make purchases more expensive for customers. The union focuses on bus service and working conditions.**
4	What two estimates could help the council weigh the benefits and costs of free rides? Explain why each would help.	**An estimate of extra trips would help show how many people might use free rides. An estimate of tax costs would help show what people might pay to fund them.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The council could test free rides for one month while counting trips and tracking costs. The rider group wants to lower travel costs for riders, while the transit department is concerned about paying for bus service. The rider group's interviews are limited because they took place at only two stops during the morning commute. The council could use the test results to judge whether it needs new funding before making rides free for a full year.

Accept other source comparisons and next steps grounded in the passage. Students should distinguish a source's claim from a limit on what that source can show.