Civic Choices Count

How everyday actions support the public good

9-12.GOV.13 "Describe, at the national, state, and local level, what should be reasonably expected from any citizen or resident of the U.S. and explain why it is important for the well-being of the nation, including being informed on civic issues..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Write L, S, or N beside one action at each level of government, underline why each action helps the public, and circle words that show who can or must take that action.

A Heat Wave, Three Levels of Government

1. During a July heat wave, a town council considers turning the library into an evening cooling center. Residents can read the proposal, ask how many people lack safe places to cool down, and speak at a public meeting. They should listen when neighbors disagree and respect each person's right to speak. Volunteers might deliver water, while a resident serving on the council helps decide how public money is spent. People also obey local safety rules and pay any local taxes they owe. These actions help the town protect vulnerable neighbors without shutting anyone out of the decision.

2. At the state level, the heat wave raises questions about power outages and emergency planning. Residents can compare candidates' plans and check reliable reports before forming an opinion. Eligible citizens can vote in state elections, choosing officials who shape policies and budgets. Eligible citizens may also be called for jury service in state courts; jurors hear evidence and help protect the right to a fair trial. Residents must obey state laws and pay state taxes they owe. Even when an issue seems distant from daily life, informed participation and fair treatment of others help state institutions earn public trust.

3. National decisions also affect the town. Congress can fund weather research and emergency aid, but people should examine proposals before asking representatives to act. Eligible citizens can vote in federal elections, while everyone must follow federal laws and pay federal taxes they owe. Some people choose military service to defend the country; others choose civilian service, such as AmeriCorps, to address community needs. These are ways to serve, not requirements for every resident. By staying informed, honoring others' rights, and contributing through service or taxes, people support institutions that can respond to crises across the country.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. At the local level, how do delivering water and serving on the town council help in different ways?

2. How can voting and jury service each support the state? Explain who may take part in each.

3. Compare the two kinds of national service in the passage. What public need can each address, and must every resident serve?

4. How could paying taxes people owe help the town respond to the heat wave at both the local and national levels?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

In five or six sentences, explain one reasonable action at each of the local, state, and national levels that could help your county handle repeated flooding, and tell why each matters. Identify one action open to all residents and one action limited to eligible citizens.

ANSWER KEY

Civic Choices Count

HIGH SCHOOL · 9-12.GOV.13

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Write L, S, or N beside one action at each level of government, underline why each action helps the public, and circle words that show who can or must take that action. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	At the local level, how do delivering water and serving on the town council help in different ways?	**Delivering water helps people during the heat wave. Serving on the council helps decide how public money is spent, including decisions about the cooling center.**
2	How can voting and jury service each support the state? Explain who may take part in each.	**Eligible citizens can vote for officials who shape state policies and budgets. Eligible citizens called for jury service can help protect the right to a fair trial.**
3	Compare the two kinds of national service in the passage. What public need can each address, and must every resident serve?	**Military service helps defend the country, while civilian service such as AmeriCorps addresses community needs. Neither is required of every resident.**
4	How could paying taxes people owe help the town respond to the heat wave at both the local and national levels?	**Local taxes contribute to public money the council decides how to spend. Federal taxes help support national efforts such as weather research and emergency aid.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

At the local level, any resident can attend a county meeting about flood shelters and ask whose homes are hardest to reach. That information can help officials plan shelters that serve more people. At the state level, eligible citizens can vote for lawmakers whose flood plans they have checked, helping shape emergency policies. At the national level, residents can pay federal taxes they owe, helping fund emergency aid. People can also volunteer at a local shelter, where their time helps neighbors stay safe.

Accept other passage-supported explanations that connect an action to public well-being. For the open task, look for a distinct action and reason at each level, with accurate limits on voting and taxes.