Who Decides Lunch?

A food truck shows how business choices and government rules interact.

9-12.GOV.26 "Explain the government's limited role in free enterprise and how that affects individual economic freedoms."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two choices that belong to Maya or her customers, and circle two government actions. Draw an arrow from each circled action to a sentence that explains how it affects Maya's choices.

Maya's Food Truck

1. At lunchtime, Maya parks her food truck near an office building. She owns the truck and chooses whether to sell soup or sandwiches. Customers decide whether to buy her food, and nearby trucks compete for their business. Maya sets her menu prices, but a price that customers reject may leave her with unsold meals. In a free enterprise system, most of these daily decisions belong to businesses and consumers, not officials. This freedom lets Maya test new recipes and lets customers spend their money elsewhere if they prefer.

2. Before Maya can serve lunch, the city requires a food permit and a health inspection. Inspectors check whether the truck stores ingredients at safe temperatures and has a place for workers to wash their hands. Maya must pay for the permit and follow these rules, so she cannot operate however she wants. Yet the rules can reduce the risk of illness, making customers more willing to choose a meal. The city does not write Maya's menu or select her customers. Its limited role sets safety conditions while leaving most selling and buying choices to individuals.

3. Maya also pays taxes on her business earnings, which reduces the money she can keep or invest. Tax revenue can help fund public services, including the streets customers use to reach her truck. Paying taxes is not the same as having officials run the truck: Maya still decides whether to hire help or expand to a second location. Government action can protect shared interests and support commerce, but it can also add costs or narrow choices. To judge its effect on economic freedom, ask which decision a rule limits, what problem it addresses, and which choices remain private.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does the permit limit Maya's freedom to run her truck, and what problem might the requirement help prevent?

2. How can paying taxes affect Maya's business choices while also supporting commerce?

3. Maya sets her menu prices, but the city requires a health inspection. What does this difference show about the government's role?

4. How might a health inspection affect customers' freedom to choose where to eat?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine you open a bicycle repair stand. In four sentences, name one business choice you control, propose one government rule that addresses a public concern, explain how it limits your choices, and explain how it could protect customers' freedom to choose.

ANSWER KEY

Who Decides Lunch?

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two choices that belong to Maya or her customers, and circle two government actions. Draw an arrow from each circled action to a sentence that explains how it affects Maya's choices. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does the permit limit Maya's freedom to run her truck, and what problem might the requirement help prevent?	**Maya must pay for the permit and follow food safety rules before operating. The requirements can help prevent illness.**
2	How can paying taxes affect Maya's business choices while also supporting commerce?	**Taxes leave Maya with less money to keep or invest, but tax revenue can help fund streets that customers use to reach her truck.**
3	Maya sets her menu prices, but the city requires a health inspection. What does this difference show about the government's role?	**The city sets safety conditions, while Maya makes most daily business decisions, including what prices to charge.**
4	How might a health inspection affect customers' freedom to choose where to eat?	**The inspection does not choose a meal for customers. By reducing the risk of illness, it may make them more willing to buy from the truck.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I would choose which bicycle parts to stock and what to charge for repairs. A local rule could require repair stands to get a customer's approval before adding a paid repair. That rule would limit my freedom to perform and charge for extra work without asking. It could protect customers from surprise costs while leaving me free to set prices and customers free to choose another stand.

Accept other passage-based explanations that connect a government action to a specific limit on choice. For Part 3, accept a plausible rule if the response explains both a limit on the owner's choices and a benefit to customers' ability to choose.