The Fair Vote

Weigh access, accuracy, and time in an election.

9-12.GOV.55 "Evaluate the challenges of the election process."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline three election challenges, circle a possible response to each, and write matching numbers beside each response and its drawback.

A County Faces Election Choices

1. Weeks before Election Day, a storm closes the bridge that many residents use to reach the only polling place in a rural county's eastern district. A possible second site is 18 miles from the first. State law governs voting times and locations, while county officials choose sites and hire poll workers within those rules. Opening another site could shorten travel and lines, but it requires trained staff, accessible space, and secure equipment. Keeping one site costs less, yet the hardest trip may fall on people without cars or flexible work hours. Convenience is not the only test of a fair election.

2. Mail voting offers another route for eligible voters, including people who cannot travel on Election Day. Rules differ by state, and ballots must meet the state's deadlines and verification requirements. Checking signatures or other required information can help confirm that a ballot came from the voter, but mistakes or missing information may delay or disqualify a valid vote. Some states give voters a chance to correct certain ballot problems before a deadline. That safeguard takes staff time and a reliable way to contact voters. Officials must weigh access against the need to verify ballots consistently and protect voter privacy.

3. After polls close, the county reports unofficial results. A close race leads some residents to demand an immediate winner; others want every eligible ballot checked first. Provisional ballots, used when eligibility cannot be confirmed at the polling place, require review under state rules before they can be counted. A paper record can support an audit that checks whether the reported totals match the ballots, but that review takes time. Announcing a winner before required checks are complete may create confusion if totals change. Delaying explanations, however, can feed rumors. Clear updates can state what remains to be checked without claiming certainty too soon.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Would opening a second polling site solve the bridge problem without creating another challenge? Weigh one benefit against one drawback.

2. How can checking mail ballots both protect an election and prevent a valid vote from counting? What response does the passage describe?

3. Why might reporting a winner immediately after polls close be a poor choice? Evaluate the passage's alternative.

4. Compare a second polling site with mail voting as ways to improve access. What different challenge comes with each?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine your county can fund either two more trained poll workers at an existing site or a staffed ballot-help phone line for mail voters. Write one paragraph recommending a choice. Explain its access benefit, an accuracy or security concern, one drawback, and how you would address that drawback.

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PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline three election challenges, circle a possible response to each, and write matching numbers beside each response and its drawback. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Would opening a second polling site solve the bridge problem without creating another challenge? Weigh one benefit against one drawback.	**It could shorten travel and lines, but it would require trained staff, accessible space, and secure equipment.**
2	How can checking mail ballots both protect an election and prevent a valid vote from counting? What response does the passage describe?	**Verification helps confirm a ballot came from the voter, but an error or missing information may delay or disqualify it. Some states let voters correct certain problems before a deadline.**
3	Why might reporting a winner immediately after polls close be a poor choice? Evaluate the passage's alternative.	**Provisional ballots and possible audits still need review, so totals may change. Clear updates can explain the checks without claiming certainty too soon.**
4	Compare a second polling site with mail voting as ways to improve access. What different challenge comes with each?	**A second site may reduce travel but needs staff, space, and equipment. Mail voting helps people who cannot travel, but ballots must meet deadlines and verification rules.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I would fund a ballot-help phone line in a state that allows voters to correct certain mail-ballot problems. Workers could explain the correction deadline, helping eligible votes count without skipping verification. They would need to protect private voter information and give everyone the same instructions. The line would take money away from training extra poll workers, so lines at the polling place might remain long. I would track wait times and use that information when planning staffing for the next election.

Accept supported judgments that identify both a benefit and a challenge. For the open task, students may choose either option if they address all four requested points without assuming that every state has the same mail-ballot rules.