Beyond One Person

Trace the shared conditions behind a personal difficulty.

S.9.1 "Identify characteristics of a social problem as opposed to an individual problem."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two details showing that many residents are affected. Circle two details showing who has power over the shared conditions, then number two steps Maya can take that will not fix the building-wide problem.

Too Hot at Cedar Court

1 At the Cedar Court apartments, Maya's bedroom stays hot long after sunset. She first blames the old fan on her desk. When its motor fails, she replaces it, and the new fan cools her room a little. But neighbors on three floors report the same problem. Their windows barely open, and the building's ventilation system has not worked properly for months. Several residents miss sleep, and some worry about relatives with health conditions that make extreme heat especially dangerous. Maya's broken fan was one household's problem. The heat throughout the building points to something larger.

2 A problem is social when it affects many people and is connected to shared conditions, rules, or decisions beyond one person's control. At Cedar Court, the owner decides when to repair ventilation, while city housing inspectors can check whether the building meets local safety rules. Residents cannot fix the system by buying separate fans. The heat does not affect everyone equally: people who work nights must sleep during hotter daytime hours, and some residents cannot afford higher electric bills from running fans. These differences matter, but they do not turn a shared building failure into dozens of unrelated personal mistakes.

3 That does not mean individual choices never matter. Maya can close her curtains during the afternoon and use her new fan, steps that may help her tonight. Such steps do not repair the ventilation for everyone. Residents organize a meeting, record temperatures in their units, and send a joint request for repairs to the owner. If the problem continues, they can contact the city housing office. The point is not that every uncomfortable room is a social problem. Evidence of a repeated pattern, a shared cause, and a need for coordinated action makes this case different.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why is Maya's failed desk fan an individual problem, while the heat at Cedar Court is a social problem?

2. Which decisions or rules in the passage put a lasting solution beyond any one resident's control?

3. How do the effects on night workers and residents facing higher electric bills support calling the heat a social problem?

4. Why might a joint repair request address the social problem more directly than closing Maya's curtains?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Invent a realistic school or town situation that might look like one person's problem but has a shared cause. In 4 or 5 sentences, describe one person's difficulty, evidence that others face it too, the shared cause, and an action that could address that cause.

ANSWER KEY

Beyond One Person

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two details showing that many residents are affected. Circle two details showing who has power over the shared conditions, then number two steps Maya can take that will not fix the building-wide problem. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why is Maya's failed desk fan an individual problem, while the heat at Cedar Court is a social problem?	**The failed fan affects Maya's household and can be replaced by her. The heat affects residents on several floors and is linked to the building's faulty ventilation.**
2	Which decisions or rules in the passage put a lasting solution beyond any one resident's control?	**The owner decides when to repair the ventilation, and city housing inspectors can check whether the building meets local safety rules.**
3	How do the effects on night workers and residents facing higher electric bills support calling the heat a social problem?	**The same building-wide failure affects multiple groups, though night workers face hotter sleeping hours and some residents cannot afford the cost of running fans.**
4	Why might a joint repair request address the social problem more directly than closing Maya's curtains?	**A joint request asks the owner to repair the shared ventilation system. Closing Maya's curtains may help her but does not fix the system.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Jordan keeps arriving late to first period because the public bus reaches school after the bell. Other students on the same route are late several mornings a week. A reduced bus schedule has left no trip that arrives before school starts. Students and families could ask the transit agency and the school to coordinate their schedules.

Accept answers that distinguish the single failed fan from the pattern of heat linked to shared ventilation. For Part 3, look for evidence that more than one person is affected and an action aimed at the shared cause.