The Fine Question

Read how an author weighs both sides of a school library policy.

RI.8.6 "Determine an author's perspective and purpose in a text, and analyze how the author acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the author's position, circle two concerns about that position, and number two ways the author responds to those concerns.

Should Our Library Drop Overdue Fines?

1 At the school library, a book left in a backpack past its due date may cost its borrower a small fine. That charge seems fair at first: another student may be waiting to read the book. Yet I think our school should stop charging overdue fines, not stop setting due dates. A student who owes even a few dollars may avoid the library desk instead of bringing a book back. A fee meant to speed up returns can make an overdue book stay out longer.

2 Critics have a serious point. If borrowers face no penalty, some may return books late, leaving classmates without them. The school also must replace books that never come back, and replacements cost money. These concerns are reasons to track returns, not reasons to charge every late borrower. A reminder before the due date could prevent some delays. When a book is overdue, the librarian could ask the borrower to return or renew it. A lost book would still require a separate conversation about replacement.

3 Neither side can promise that its plan will work for every student. Before changing the rules for good, our school could try one semester without overdue fines and compare the number of overdue books with the previous semester. The comparison would not be perfect, since the books students borrow may differ from semester to semester. Still, it would give us evidence to discuss instead of guessing. If more books stay out too long, the library could change its reminders or renewal rules while keeping the door open to every reader.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What change does the author want, and what reason does the author give for it?

2. What two concerns does the author acknowledge about ending overdue fines?

3. How does the author respond to concerns about late and missing books without proposing overdue fines?

4. Why does the author admit that comparing two semesters would not be a perfect test? How does that admission affect the argument?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

A classmate says, "If we end overdue fines, we should end due dates too." Write a four-sentence reply that states your position, acknowledges why the classmate might feel that way, and uses two different details from the passage to respond.

ANSWER KEY

The Fine Question

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the author's position, circle two concerns about that position, and number two ways the author responds to those concerns. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What change does the author want, and what reason does the author give for it?	**The author wants to end overdue fines but keep due dates because fines may cause students to avoid returning books.**
2	What two concerns does the author acknowledge about ending overdue fines?	**Books might be returned late, leaving classmates without them, and the school must pay to replace books that never return.**
3	How does the author respond to concerns about late and missing books without proposing overdue fines?	**The author proposes reminders, requests to return or renew overdue books, and separate conversations about replacing lost books.**
4	Why does the author admit that comparing two semesters would not be a perfect test? How does that admission affect the argument?	**Students may borrow different books in each semester. Acknowledging this limit shows the author does not treat the comparison as conclusive, while still proposing it as useful evidence.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I would keep due dates even if the school stops charging fines. I understand why you might want fewer rules, since fines can make a student avoid the library desk. But a classmate may be waiting for an overdue book, so the librarian needs to know when to ask for it. A reminder before the due date could help students return books without owing money.

Accept answers that accurately distinguish ending fines from ending due dates and explain how the author takes concerns about late or missing books seriously. For the open response, look for four sentences that acknowledge the classmate's view and use two distinct passage details.