Courtyard Choices

Discuss needs, make a fair decision, and propose action

6.P.1.1.B "Apply a range of deliberative and democratic procedures to discuss, make decisions, and propose action about real-world problems in and out of school."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two rules that help people discuss the problem fairly, and circle the way students made their decision. Number the two steps the council took or planned after the vote.

A Plan for the Courtyard

1 At Cedar Middle School, the courtyard was crowded at lunch. Students who wanted to talk quietly sat beside a fast four-square game. Last Tuesday, a ball hit a student's lunch tray. Some students asked to ban games, while others said lunch was their only time to play. The student council could not decide by asking who shouted loudest. It invited students, aides, and the principal to a meeting. Its goal was to make the courtyard safer without removing everyone's chance to enjoy lunch.

2 At the meeting, a council member explained the rules: each speaker had one minute, and no one could interrupt. Students first named needs, not favorite plans. Players needed room to move, and others needed a calm place to sit. An aide pointed out that the doorway had to stay clear for people leaving the building. In small groups, students suggested two plans: mark a play zone on the far side of the courtyard, or move all games to the field. Each group shared one benefit and one concern for each plan.

3 The council tried for agreement, but rain would often close the field, so some students opposed moving every game there. Members then held a secret ballot with one vote per student at the meeting. The marked play zone won, 18 votes to 11. To respect students who preferred quiet, the plan also placed seating away from the game. The council wrote a proposal asking the principal to approve painted boundary lines and a two-week trial. It promised to ask students and aides for feedback before suggesting a permanent rule.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why were speaking rules a fairer way to discuss the problem than listening only to the loudest students?

2. What concern kept the group from agreeing to move all games to the field? How did students make a decision instead?

3. How did the chosen plan respond to both players and students who wanted a quiet place?

4. What did the council ask the principal to approve, and how would it check the plan before suggesting a permanent rule?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Your school library has only a few lunchtime seats, and students disagree about how to share them. In 5 to 6 sentences, explain how you would hear different views, compare at least two options, make a fair group decision, and test the plan.

ANSWER KEY

Courtyard Choices

GRADE 6 · 6.P.1.1.B

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two rules that help people discuss the problem fairly, and circle the way students made their decision. Number the two steps the council took or planned after the vote. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why were speaking rules a fairer way to discuss the problem than listening only to the loudest students?	**A time limit gave speakers a turn, and the rule against interruptions let others hear their needs.**
2	What concern kept the group from agreeing to move all games to the field? How did students make a decision instead?	**Rain would often close the field. Students used a secret ballot with one vote per student.**
3	How did the chosen plan respond to both players and students who wanted a quiet place?	**It gave players a marked zone on the far side of the courtyard and placed seating away from the game.**
4	What did the council ask the principal to approve, and how would it check the plan before suggesting a permanent rule?	**It asked for painted boundary lines and a two-week trial, then planned to gather feedback from students and aides.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I would invite students who study and students who read for fun to share their needs without interruptions. We could compare reserving seats ahead of time with using a first-come rule. Reservations could help students plan, but a first-come rule would take less work. If we could not agree, students would cast one secret vote each. I would ask the librarian to try the winning plan for two weeks. Afterward, we would ask students and the librarian whether the wait improved before keeping or changing the plan.

For the marking job, accept the one-minute limit and no-interruption rule, the secret ballot, and the proposal and feedback steps. For Your Turn, accept different workable options and fair decision procedures if the response also includes a way to hear views and test the choice.