From Drain to Decision

Use civil discussion to trace a problem and weigh solutions

8.P.1.1 "Demonstrate an understanding of the virtue of civil discourse to analyze and address real-world problems. Analyze why the acknowledgement of different perspectives can contribute to civil discourse and solutions to civic issues..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two different concerns people raise about the litter problem. Number the steps the class uses to discuss, decide, and check its plan.

Wrappers After the Rain

1. After rain, eighth graders at Cedar Middle noticed snack wrappers beside a storm drain near the school gate. Storm drains carry rainwater away from streets, often into nearby streams without passing through a treatment plant. The class wanted fewer wrappers in the stream, but banning outdoor snacks would affect students who eat outside. They decided to investigate before proposing a rule. On two afternoons, they counted wrappers near the drain and watched where students threw away trash. Their observations showed a problem but could not prove who dropped each wrapper.

2. At a class meeting, each speaker had one minute without interruption. Maya said a covered bin closer to the gate might help students who rush to buses. Luis, who uses a wheelchair, noted that a bin must not block the sidewalk. The custodian explained that loose wrappers make cleanup harder, while a neighbor worried that litter could clog drains during storms. Students restated a view they disagreed with before responding. Hearing these concerns changed the proposal: place a covered bin off the walkway and ask the town to inspect the drain.

3. The class compared two options: banning outdoor snacks or testing the bin for one month. In small groups, students listed likely benefits and drawbacks, then used a ranked-choice vote to select a trial of the bin. They planned to count wrappers at the same spot each week and report the results to the principal and town staff. Rain can carry litter from local streams into regional rivers and, eventually, oceans. Plastic waste in waterways is a problem in many parts of the world, though one school's trial cannot solve it alone.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did listening to both Maya and Luis improve the bin proposal?

2. Why would an immediate ban on outdoor snacks leave out an important perspective?

3. How did the class make a decision, and how will it find out whether that decision helps?

4. Explain how wrappers near the school could become a wider problem. Why is the class's plan only a partial solution?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine your school wants to reduce wasted cafeteria food. In four or five sentences, describe two different perspectives, a fair way to discuss and decide, an action to test, and how food waste can matter beyond your school.

ANSWER KEY

From Drain to Decision

GRADE 8 · 8.P.1.1

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two different concerns people raise about the litter problem. Number the steps the class uses to discuss, decide, and check its plan. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did listening to both Maya and Luis improve the bin proposal?	**Maya's concern led to a bin near the gate, while Luis's concern led to placing it off the walkway.**
2	Why would an immediate ban on outdoor snacks leave out an important perspective?	**It would affect students who eat outside, and the class had not established who dropped the wrappers.**
3	How did the class make a decision, and how will it find out whether that decision helps?	**Students compared benefits and drawbacks, then used a ranked-choice vote to choose a bin trial. They will count wrappers at the same spot each week.**
4	Explain how wrappers near the school could become a wider problem. Why is the class's plan only a partial solution?	**Rain can carry wrappers into local streams, regional rivers, and oceans. A trial at one school cannot solve plastic waste in waterways elsewhere.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Some students want smaller servings, while cafeteria workers may worry that students will not get enough to eat. Each group could explain its concerns at a meeting where speakers take turns. Students and staff could compare options and vote on a two-week trial of optional smaller portions. They could weigh discarded food before and during the trial to check whether waste falls. Food waste also matters beyond school because growing and transporting uneaten food uses resources, and discarded food can produce greenhouse gases.

Accept other reasonable concerns and fair decision procedures when the response explains how perspectives shape the action. For question 4, students may describe the regional and global connections without naming specific waterways.