Who Gets a Voice?

Compare how participation and rights shape government

8.P.2.1.A "Compare and analyze civic virtues and democratic principles in historic and global settings, explaining how they influence political institutions."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline who could take part in government in each setting. Circle one civic habit in each setting, then number two ways institutions turn people's choices into decisions.

Two Ways to Take Part

1. In ancient Athens, a citizen could speak and vote at a public assembly on decisions such as war and spending. Many public offices were filled by lottery, which gave eligible citizens a turn in government. Speaking honestly and listening to neighbors mattered because a large group had to decide what to do. Yet citizenship was limited to free adult men born to Athenian parents. Women, enslaved people, and foreign residents could not vote in the assembly, even though its decisions affected their lives.

2. In 1994, South Africa held its first national election in which adult citizens of all races could vote. Under apartheid, racist laws had denied most Black South Africans the vote and kept political power in white hands. People waited in long lines to cast ballots. Today, voters choose representatives to serve in Parliament rather than voting on each national law themselves. The Constitution protects political rights, and the Constitutional Court can strike down laws that violate it. These institutions make equal citizenship a rule that elected officials must respect.

3. In any democracy, a voter can study a proposal before deciding, and a speaker can listen when neighbors disagree. These habits show responsibility to a larger community. They also help people question leaders without rejecting the rules that allow disagreement. In an assembly, informed speakers can affect a vote directly. In a system with elected representatives, informed voters can choose leaders and later demand explanations. A court can enforce constitutional limits, but it cannot make citizens pay attention or treat opponents fairly.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did eligible people in Athens make decisions differently from voters in South Africa today?

2. How did the voting rules in each setting affect whose views could shape government?

3. Why would listening to others matter in Athens, while studying proposals would matter to voters choosing representatives?

4. What democratic principle does South Africa's Constitutional Court support, and how is its job different from the Athenian assembly's job?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

A new town must decide how to spend its flood-repair fund. In 4 to 5 sentences, propose who may take part, whether people vote on each plan or elect a council, and one civic habit that would improve decisions. Explain one way your plan borrows from Athens or South Africa and one way it changes that example.

ANSWER KEY

Who Gets a Voice?

GRADE 8 · 8.P.2.1.A

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline who could take part in government in each setting. Circle one civic habit in each setting, then number two ways institutions turn people's choices into decisions. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did eligible people in Athens make decisions differently from voters in South Africa today?	**Eligible Athenians voted on decisions in an assembly. South African voters elect representatives who make decisions in Parliament.**
2	How did the voting rules in each setting affect whose views could shape government?	**Athens excluded women, enslaved people, and foreign residents from assembly votes. South Africa's 1994 election allowed adult citizens of all races to vote for representatives.**
3	Why would listening to others matter in Athens, while studying proposals would matter to voters choosing representatives?	**Athenian citizens decided issues together in an assembly, so listening could help them weigh others' concerns. South African voters can use what they learn to choose representatives and hold them accountable.**
4	What democratic principle does South Africa's Constitutional Court support, and how is its job different from the Athenian assembly's job?	**The court supports constitutional rights by striking down laws that violate the Constitution. The Athenian assembly voted on public decisions.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

All adult residents, including newcomers, should have a vote in choosing the town's leaders. They should elect a council to compare repair plans and approve spending. Voters should read each plan and listen to neighbors whose homes face different risks. My plan borrows South Africa's use of elected representatives instead of asking everyone to vote on every decision. It changes South Africa's national voting rule by including adult residents who are not citizens, because the flood affects their homes too.

Accept other accurate comparisons supported by the passage. For Part 3, look for a clear participation rule, a decision-making institution, a relevant civic habit, and a specific connection to and change from one historical example.