Who Decides?

Compare government power and citizens' influence

8.P.2.1.B "Compare the powers and responsibilities of the United States of America's government to other forms of government, including the roles and rights of citizens."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline who can make decisions in each system. Circle what people can do to influence those decisions so you can compare their roles and rights.

The Sunday Library Decision

1. Imagine a town debating whether to keep its public library open on Sundays. In the United States, a local council may set library hours and decide how to spend local funds, within state and federal law. Council members are usually elected by eligible local voters. Residents can speak at a public meeting or contact officials, and citizens can petition the government. Eligible citizens can vote in local and national elections. Local officials must follow the law, and residents must obey laws and pay taxes they owe.

2. Now picture a country ruled by an absolute monarch. The monarch holds final authority over major government decisions and may appoint local officials rather than have voters choose them. Those officials might decide library hours and funding. Residents could ask for longer hours, but their ability to challenge officials publicly would depend on the country's laws and the monarch's decisions. Like a U.S. council, the government is responsible for providing services it chooses to fund. Unlike a U.S. council, its leaders need not answer to voters in competitive elections.

3. In a one-party state, one political party controls the national government. Elections may occur, but opposition parties cannot compete for national power. Local officials may still manage services such as libraries, while national party leaders can direct their choices. Citizens may be asked to vote or join public meetings, yet rules can limit their ability to organize an opposition party. Compared with the United States, this system gives citizens fewer ways to replace national leaders through elections. In every system, people's legal rights and responsibilities depend on its laws.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How might the people who decide library hours get their positions in the United States and under an absolute monarch?

2. Compare the voting role of eligible U.S. citizens with citizens' ability to replace national leaders in a one-party state.

3. How does the passage compare people's ability to challenge a library decision in the United States and under an absolute monarch?

4. How might national leaders affect a local library decision in a one-party state, compared with the role of state and federal law in a U.S. town?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

A neighborhood wants a new public bus stop. In four sentences, compare how the decision could be made in the United States, under an absolute monarch, and in a one-party state. Include one action eligible U.S. citizens could take and how citizens' influence might differ in the other systems.

ANSWER KEY

Who Decides?

GRADE 8 · 8.P.2.1.B

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline who can make decisions in each system. Circle what people can do to influence those decisions so you can compare their roles and rights. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How might the people who decide library hours get their positions in the United States and under an absolute monarch?	**U.S. local council members are usually elected by eligible local voters. An absolute monarch may appoint local officials.**
2	Compare the voting role of eligible U.S. citizens with citizens' ability to replace national leaders in a one-party state.	**Eligible U.S. citizens can vote in national elections. In a one-party state, opposition parties cannot compete for national power, giving citizens fewer ways to replace national leaders through elections.**
3	How does the passage compare people's ability to challenge a library decision in the United States and under an absolute monarch?	**U.S. residents can speak at public meetings or contact officials, and citizens can petition the government. Under an absolute monarch, the ability to challenge officials publicly depends on the country's laws and the monarch's decisions.**
4	How might national leaders affect a local library decision in a one-party state, compared with the role of state and federal law in a U.S. town?	**National party leaders can direct local officials' choices in a one-party state. A U.S. local council can make the decision within state and federal law.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

In the United States, a local council could decide to fund a new bus stop, within state and federal law. Under an absolute monarch, appointed officials could decide on the stop under the monarch's authority. In a one-party state, local officials might decide, but national party leaders could direct them. Eligible U.S. citizens could vote for local council members, while citizens in the other systems might have fewer ways to replace the leaders who control the decision.

Accept other plausible local decision makers, such as a transit agency, if the response accurately compares government authority and citizens' influence. Do not accept a claim that all U.S. residents can vote.