Hours on Trial

Weigh perspectives and evidence in a public decision.

AWH.P.1.1 "Demonstrate an understanding of the virtue of civil discourse to analyze and address real-world problems. Evaluate the impact of perspectives, civil discourse, and democratic principles on addressing civic issues..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Read the passage. Underline the two groups' concerns, circle evidence and its limits, and number the steps the board used to make and review its decision.

When Should the Library Open?

1 At a public library in a small town, the doors closed at 1 p.m. on Saturdays. A student group asked the library board to stay open until 3 p.m., saying that teens with weekday commitments needed a quiet place to study. Retirees who used the library on Tuesday mornings worried that money for more weekend staffing would cut their hours. The board could not add staff hours without new funding, but it could move two hours from Tuesday morning to Saturday afternoon. That choice made the issue more than a contest between people who liked different schedules.

2 Before the board met, a librarian counted visits during two time slots for four weeks. Tuesday mornings from 10 to 11 averaged 18 visits, while Saturdays from noon to 1 averaged 35 visits. The Saturday count suggested demand, but it could not show how many people would come after 1 p.m. A teen collected 42 signatures online; several retirees pointed out that people without internet access might not see the petition. At the meeting, the board chair asked speakers to describe how the change would affect them and to respond to ideas rather than attack people.

3 One retiree proposed keeping Tuesday morning hours by using volunteers on Saturdays. The librarian explained that volunteers could help visitors but could not replace the trained employee needed to run the desk. After hearing both sides, the board voted in public to test the two-hour shift for six weeks rather than make it permanent. The board asked staff to count Saturday visits after 1 p.m. and invite comments from Tuesday users and people who rarely visit the library. Members agreed to review the results at another public meeting before deciding whether to keep, change, or end the trial.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the students' and retirees' different needs shape the board's choice?

2. Why were the visit counts and online petition useful but not enough to settle the issue?

3. How did the chair's request and the public vote support a fair discussion and decision?

4. Why might the six-week trial address the problem better than the volunteer proposal?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Choose a different real issue in your community or a place you visit outside school. In five or six sentences, propose a public decision process that includes two perspectives, a way to check evidence, a rule for civil discussion, and a way to assess an action after a trial.

ANSWER KEY

Hours on Trial

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Read the passage. Underline the two groups' concerns, circle evidence and its limits, and number the steps the board used to make and review its decision. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the students' and retirees' different needs shape the board's choice?	**Students wanted later Saturday hours for a quiet study place, while retirees wanted to protect Tuesday morning hours. With no funding for more staff time, the board considered shifting hours between the two days.**
2	Why were the visit counts and online petition useful but not enough to settle the issue?	**The counts showed more visits during the measured Saturday hour, but not how many people would come after 1 p.m. The petition showed support, but people without internet access might not have seen it.**
3	How did the chair's request and the public vote support a fair discussion and decision?	**The chair asked speakers to explain effects and address ideas instead of attacking people. The board then voted publicly on a temporary change that could be reviewed.**
4	Why might the six-week trial address the problem better than the volunteer proposal?	**Volunteers could not replace the trained desk employee. The trial would provide later Saturday hours and let the board gather visits and comments before making a lasting decision.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

My neighborhood is deciding whether to add a marked bike lane on Main Street. Cyclists want a safer route, while shop owners worry about losing parking spaces. The town could count cyclists and parked cars at several times and invite comments from people who cannot attend a meeting. At a public meeting, speakers should restate a concern they heard before disagreeing with it. The council could test the lane with temporary barriers for one month before voting on whether to keep it. Afterward, it should review the counts, observe traffic conflicts, and consider comments from cyclists and shop owners.

Accept other passage-supported explanations that recognize competing needs, limits of the evidence, respectful discussion, and review of the trial. For Part 3, accept any distinct community issue with all five requested elements.