The Bus Budget

Who pays for a public service, and who benefits?

E.C.4.2 "Describe the purpose, costs, and benefits of government funded services."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one statement of the bus service's purpose, circle two different operating costs, and write 1 and 2 beside two different benefits. Use your marks to track what public funding pays for and what it provides.

A Ride Across Town

1. At 6:45 a.m., a city bus stops outside an apartment building. A hospital worker boards for an early shift, and a student rides to a training program across town. The city funds bus service so people can reach jobs, school, health care, and other destinations even if they do not own a car. Routes and schedules can also connect neighborhoods that private companies might not find profitable to serve. A fare pays part of each ride's expense, but public money helps keep buses running and fares lower than the full cost of service.

2. Bus service has costs beyond buying vehicles. Drivers and mechanics need wages, buses need fuel or electricity, and stops and vehicles need repairs. Local governments may pay for these expenses with taxes, fares, and sometimes grants from other levels of government. The money has an opportunity cost: funds used for buses cannot also pay for every park repair or library program. A city council might consider fewer late-night trips to save money, but that change could make it harder for workers with evening shifts to get home. Budget choices shape who can use the service.

3. The benefits reach beyond passengers who pay fares. Reliable buses can help employers find workers and give residents another way to reach stores and clinics. If enough riders choose a bus instead of driving alone, fewer cars may crowd the roads, and emissions may fall. Those results are not guaranteed: a bus with few riders still uses resources, and long waits may discourage people from using it. Officials must weigh these possible public benefits against operating costs and ask whether routes serve people who have few other travel options.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What is one purpose of city-funded bus service, and why might public funding be needed to meet it?

2. Identify two operating costs of bus service and one way a local government may pay for them.

3. Describe one possible benefit of bus service for someone who does not ride it. What condition in the passage affects whether that benefit happens?

4. If the city reduces late-night trips, what cost could it lower, and what benefit might some residents lose?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Choose a government-funded service other than bus service. In 5 or 6 sentences, describe its purpose, two distinct costs, two benefits, and one budget tradeoff.

ANSWER KEY

The Bus Budget

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one statement of the bus service's purpose, circle two different operating costs, and write 1 and 2 beside two different benefits. Use your marks to track what public funding pays for and what it provides. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What is one purpose of city-funded bus service, and why might public funding be needed to meet it?	**It helps people without cars reach destinations such as jobs and health care. Public funding can support routes that private companies might not find profitable.**
2	Identify two operating costs of bus service and one way a local government may pay for them.	**Costs include driver wages and vehicle repairs. Local governments may use taxes, fares, or grants to help pay.**
3	Describe one possible benefit of bus service for someone who does not ride it. What condition in the passage affects whether that benefit happens?	**A driver may face less road crowding if enough people take the bus instead of driving alone.**
4	If the city reduces late-night trips, what cost could it lower, and what benefit might some residents lose?	**The city could lower its spending on bus service, but evening-shift workers might lose a way to get home.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

A city could fund a public library to give residents free access to books, internet, and research help. It would pay staff wages and maintain the building. Students could use its resources for school projects. Job seekers could use its computers to complete applications. Funding longer library hours could leave less money for park repairs.

Accept other costs and benefits stated in the passage. For the final task, accept a plausible government-funded service if the response distinguishes its purpose, two costs, two benefits, and a budget tradeoff.