Before the Vote

Test the reasoning behind a public decision

E.P.1.2.C "Reinforce critical thinking by evaluating and challenging ideas and assumptions, analyzing and explaining inconsistencies in reasoning."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two claims about Saturday library access and circle the evidence offered for each. Number two details that challenge the claims.

Should Bellport Close on Saturdays?

1. In the fictional town of Bellport, the library board must close a budget gap. One member proposes ending Saturday hours at the west branch. She says weekend visits have fallen since last spring, so residents must not need the branch on Saturdays. Yet last spring the branch cut its Saturday schedule from eight hours to three when a staff member left. Visitors who work weekdays now have fewer chances to get there. A falling visit count might reflect reduced access rather than reduced interest. Both explanations fit the same observation, but they suggest very different choices.

2. Another board member argues that closing Saturdays would not affect access because residents can use the library website. The website lets people reserve books and read some digital titles, but it cannot provide a quiet study room or a public computer. At a recent Saturday repair clinic hosted at the branch, every seat was taken. That crowd challenges the idea that nobody needs the building, although a special event does not prove ordinary Saturdays would be just as busy. The two members are using evidence that deserves attention, but neither claim follows automatically from it.

3. The board still has to cover its costs. Staff members estimate that ending Saturday hours would reduce wages and utility bills, but they have not compared those savings with other options. One option is to open later on two weekdays and restore longer Saturday hours for a trial month. To judge the trial, the board could record visits per open hour on each day and ask visitors which services they used. It should also ask who could not visit under either schedule. A decision can weigh costs against access without pretending that a single visit count settles the issue.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What assumption connects falling Saturday visits to the claim that residents do not need Saturday hours? Which detail challenges that assumption?

2. Why does the library website not prove that closing Saturdays would leave access unchanged? Name two services it cannot provide.

3. How does the repair clinic challenge one board member's claim without settling the question of ordinary Saturday demand?

4. How could the proposed trial test the idea that fewer visits mean less interest? Name two kinds of information the board should collect.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

A student council member says, "The school should remove all water refill stations because most students bought bottled water at last week's basketball game." In four sentences, identify an assumption, explain why the evidence may not support the claim, propose evidence to collect, and suggest a fair next step.

ANSWER KEY

Before the Vote

HIGH SCHOOL · E.P.1.2.C

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two claims about Saturday library access and circle the evidence offered for each. Number two details that challenge the claims. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What assumption connects falling Saturday visits to the claim that residents do not need Saturday hours? Which detail challenges that assumption?	**The claim assumes fewer visits mean less interest. Saturday hours fell from eight to three, so residents had fewer chances to visit.**
2	Why does the library website not prove that closing Saturdays would leave access unchanged? Name two services it cannot provide.	**The website cannot provide a quiet study room or a public computer.**
3	How does the repair clinic challenge one board member's claim without settling the question of ordinary Saturday demand?	**Every seat was taken, which challenges the idea that nobody needs the building. A special event may draw more people than an ordinary Saturday.**
4	How could the proposed trial test the idea that fewer visits mean less interest? Name two kinds of information the board should collect.	**The board could record visits per open hour under the trial schedule and ask who could not visit under either schedule. These measures would help distinguish low interest from limited access.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The claim assumes that buying bottled water at one game means students do not use refill stations. Game purchases may not reflect how students get water during a normal school day. The council could count refills during school and ask students why they bought water at the game. It should compare those findings with maintenance costs before deciding whether to remove any station.

Accept other passage-supported challenges to the board members' reasoning. For the open task, accept different proposed evidence if it could test the student council member's assumption.