Crossing the Divide

Weigh evidence and perspectives in a community decision

OKH.P.1 "Apply critical thinking skills to address authentic civic issues. Demonstrate an understanding of the virtue of civil discourse to analyze and address real-world problems. Evaluate the impact of perspectives, civil discourse..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline evidence that could help the council make a decision, circle a limit of that evidence, and number two places where people address a different perspective. Use your marks to consider what the council knows and what it still needs to learn.

A Safer Route to the Library

1. At a city meeting in the town of Mill Creek, residents debate whether to add a marked crossing near the public library. Students who ride the bus say cars rarely stop when they cross after evening programs. A nearby shop owner worries that removing two parking spaces for a curb extension could make deliveries harder. Both want a safer, usable street, but they disagree about how to change it. The city council can approve street changes, yet it must consider public access and the effects on people who travel differently. No speaker alone can settle the question.

2. Before voting, council members review a city traffic report. Staff measured vehicle speeds on one weekday afternoon and found that many drivers exceeded the posted limit. That report is stronger evidence about that afternoon than a resident's guess, but it does not describe traffic after evening programs. Library staff share attendance records showing that programs end after dark during part of the year. A survey of bus riders reports several frightening crossings, though riders chose whether to respond. The shop owner offers delivery records showing when trucks arrive. None of these sources alone establishes which design will work best.

3. At the meeting, a student first repeats the shop owner's concern accurately before proposing a trial crossing with temporary signs. The owner agrees to consider a trial if delivery access remains open. A transportation engineer cautions that signs alone may not slow cars, so council members ask staff to compare safer designs and collect evening observations. They invite bus riders, drivers, and nearby businesses to comment before a public vote. A trial could test a design, but the council would still need to check access and safety for people using the street. Respectful listening reveals common goals without erasing the disagreement.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why would it be unsound to use the city traffic report to claim that many drivers speed after evening programs?

2. How do the student and shop owner practice civil discourse without giving up their different concerns?

3. How do the traffic report and library attendance records together reveal a gap in the evidence?

4. Why would a public vote alone not show whether a trial crossing succeeded?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence comment to the council proposing a next step other than the temporary-sign trial. Identify an evidence gap, explain how to investigate it, address a different stakeholder's concern, and say how the council should use the findings fairly.

Crossing the Divide

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline evidence that could help the council make a decision, circle a limit of that evidence, and number two places where people address a different perspective. Use your marks to consider what the council knows and what it still needs to learn. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why would it be unsound to use the city traffic report to claim that many drivers speed after evening programs?	**Staff measured speeds on one weekday afternoon, not after evening programs.**
2	How do the student and shop owner practice civil discourse without giving up their different concerns?	**The student accurately repeats the owner's concern, and the owner considers a trial if delivery access stays open. They still prioritize different effects of the crossing.**
3	How do the traffic report and library attendance records together reveal a gap in the evidence?	**The report covers afternoon speeds, while the records show that programs sometimes end after dark. Evening traffic conditions have not been measured.**
4	Why would a public vote alone not show whether a trial crossing succeeded?	**A vote selects a course of action but does not measure whether the trial improves safety while preserving access. The council would need to check both.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The city should observe vehicle speeds and pedestrian crossings after evening library programs before testing a design. The afternoon report cannot tell us what happens when those programs end. To respect the shop owner's delivery needs, staff should also record when trucks use the curb. Council members should share the results and invite bus riders and businesses to comment before choosing a design.

Accept other evidence-based interpretations that distinguish what a source shows from what it cannot show. For the comment, look for a feasible new step, attention to another stakeholder, and a fair use of the findings.