Across the Divide

Trace how unequal access can shape opportunities and influence.

S.5.1 "Analyze patterns of social stratification and their effects on individuals and groups."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB As you read, underline two differences in access to resources, circle one effect on an individual, and number two linked effects that could reinforce a divide between groups.

Housing and Opportunity in Bellport

1 In the fictional city of Bellport, a river separates two neighborhoods, but the bigger divide is access to stable housing. Many families on the west bank own homes bought years ago, while many on the east bank rent and face frequent moves when rents rise. Homeownership does not make every west-bank family wealthy, and renters do not all have low incomes. Still, the pattern matters: owners can build equity as home values rise, while renters usually do not gain that asset. Families with savings can also handle a sudden repair or job loss more easily.

2 These housing differences reach students at Bellport High. A student whose family must move may lose a familiar bus route, miss class during the move, or struggle to keep a quiet study space. Students in stable homes may have more time to join clubs or take unpaid summer placements that build résumés. This is not a measure of anyone's talent or effort. It shows how unequal access to money and housing can create unequal chances to collect experiences that later employers value. When many students face the same barriers, the effect reaches a group, not just one person.

3 City leaders notice that the west bank has more homeowners serving on neighborhood committees, whose meetings take place early in the evening. East-bank renters working late shifts often cannot attend. As a result, proposals for safer crossings near rental buildings may receive less attention, even though students there need them. A new city rule sets some meetings on weekends and allows written comments. These changes could widen participation, but they cannot erase the income gap or guarantee that every proposal will pass. In Bellport, housing, time, and political voice can reinforce one another, while a change in procedure can interrupt part of the pattern.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How can the housing pattern in Bellport lead to a growing difference in financial resources between owners and renters?

2. Explain one way a family move could affect a student's opportunities beyond the move itself.

3. How might the meeting schedule affect which group's needs receive attention? Use two details from the passage.

4. What part of the pattern could the new meeting rule change, and what part would it leave in place?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Invent a job-training program in which two groups have unequal access to a resource. In one paragraph, explain the pattern, one effect on an individual, one effect on a group, and one realistic change that could reduce the gap without solving every problem.

Across the Divide

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

As you read, underline two differences in access to resources, circle one effect on an individual, and number two linked effects that could reinforce a divide between groups. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How can the housing pattern in Bellport lead to a growing difference in financial resources between owners and renters?	**Owners can build equity as home values rise, while renters usually do not gain that asset. Families with savings can also manage unexpected costs more easily.**
2	Explain one way a family move could affect a student's opportunities beyond the move itself.	**A move could cause a student to miss class or lose a familiar bus route, making it harder to participate in school and collect experiences that employers later value.**
3	How might the meeting schedule affect which group's needs receive attention? Use two details from the passage.	**More west-bank homeowners serve on committees, while east-bank renters working late shifts often cannot attend early-evening meetings. Proposals for safer crossings near rental buildings may therefore receive less attention.**
4	What part of the pattern could the new meeting rule change, and what part would it leave in place?	**Weekend meetings and written comments could give more renters a chance to participate. The rule would not erase the income gap or ensure that their proposals pass.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

At a job-training program, workers on daytime shifts can attend free certification classes, but workers on night shifts cannot. One night-shift worker may miss a chance to qualify for a higher-paying job. If many night-shift workers face this barrier, fewer people in that group may earn certifications, widening the pay gap between shifts. Offering the classes at two times could give more workers access. It would not remove every barrier, since some workers may still need transportation or child care.

Accept other passage-supported causal links and effects. For Part 3, look for an invented unequal-access pattern, distinct individual and group effects, and a plausible change with a stated limit.