The Last Bus

Trace how unequal access shapes work, services, and public debate.

S.5.3 "Analyze effects of stratification and social inequality on individuals and groups, including life outcomes, social problems, and group conflict."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two unequal resources or opportunities, circle two effects on individual workers, and write 1 beside a community-wide problem and 2 beside a source of group conflict. Use your marks to trace how an unequal starting point affects more than one person.

A Shift Without a Ride

1. In the fictional city of Bellport, a hospital hires cleaners for shifts that end at 11 p.m. Most workers who live near the hospital can walk home. Across town, cheaper rents draw many cleaners to Southbank, where households are less likely to own cars. The last bus to Southbank now leaves at 10:30 p.m., after a budget cut. A worker without a car may pay for a ride, miss a shift, or refuse the job. None of these choices reflects how well that worker cleans. Housing costs and transportation together shape who can keep a steady paycheck.

2. The effects spread beyond individual paychecks. When a cleaner spends part of each night's wages on a ride home, less money remains for food or savings. Missed shifts can also put a job at risk, making it harder to pay rent. At the hospital, managers struggle to fill late shifts, and patients may wait longer for rooms to be cleaned. These outcomes are not guaranteed for every person in Southbank. Some workers share rides or change schedules. Still, the bus schedule places a heavier burden on workers who cannot afford housing nearby or a car.

3. At a council meeting, Southbank riders ask the city to restore a late bus. Some residents of a wealthier area oppose using city funds for a route they rarely take. Riders argue that the route helps workers reach jobs that serve the whole city, including hospital patients. Opponents say the money should repair streets instead. The disagreement becomes sharper when speakers call riders irresponsible or call opponents uncaring. Those labels hide the different resources each group has. Council members could compare the cost of a late route with the costs of vacant shifts and lost wages before voting.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How do housing costs and the bus schedule work together to limit a Southbank cleaner's job options?

2. How could paying for rides or missing shifts affect a cleaner's ability to meet basic needs?

3. How could the transportation gap become a problem for people who do not ride the bus?

4. Why do the two groups disagree about restoring the late bus, and what makes their conflict sharper?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

In another town, job applications are online, but some households cannot afford home internet and the library closes at 4 p.m. Write five sentences explaining a possible effect on one person's job prospects, a town-wide problem, and a disagreement between groups; include one possible response and a tradeoff.

The Last Bus

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two unequal resources or opportunities, circle two effects on individual workers, and write 1 beside a community-wide problem and 2 beside a source of group conflict. Use your marks to trace how an unequal starting point affects more than one person. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How do housing costs and the bus schedule work together to limit a Southbank cleaner's job options?	**Cheaper housing draws cleaners to Southbank, but the last bus leaves before their shifts end. A cleaner without a car may have to pay for a ride, miss a shift, or refuse the job.**
2	How could paying for rides or missing shifts affect a cleaner's ability to meet basic needs?	**Ride costs leave less money for food or savings. Missed shifts can put the job at risk and make rent harder to pay.**
3	How could the transportation gap become a problem for people who do not ride the bus?	**The hospital may struggle to fill late cleaning shifts, and patients may wait longer for rooms to be cleaned.**
4	Why do the two groups disagree about restoring the late bus, and what makes their conflict sharper?	**Riders say the route helps workers reach jobs that serve the city. Opponents would rather spend the money on streets. Calling either group irresponsible or uncaring sharpens the conflict.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

A person without home internet who works until 5 p.m. may miss job openings because the library is already closed. If many applicants face that barrier, local businesses may struggle to find workers even when residents need jobs. Households without service might ask the town to keep the library open later, while taxpayers who already have internet might object to the added cost. The town could fund two evening library sessions each week. That plan would expand access, but it would leave less money for other library services.

Accept other plausible cause-and-effect explanations supported by the passage. For Your Turn, look for a clear link from unequal internet access to a life outcome, a group-level effect, a possible conflict, and a response with a tradeoff.