Test the Claim

Examine the reasoning behind a town proposal

TOT.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 Rivera makes and circle the evidence she uses to support them. Number two places where her conclusion goes beyond that evidence.

Should Bus Rides Be Free?

1. At a town meeting, council member Rivera proposed making buses free for one year. She argued that removing fares would help workers reach jobs and reduce traffic. Her evidence was a survey of 120 bus riders: 96 said they would ride more often if fares disappeared. Rivera then claimed that nearly everyone in town would use buses more. Yet the survey included only people already waiting at bus stops, not residents who never ride.

2. Rivera also pointed to a nearby town where bus trips rose after fares were removed. During the same month, that town added two routes and opened a large shopping center beside a bus stop. She said the fare change alone caused the increase. A resident questioned that conclusion: either new routes or the shopping center might explain some added trips. The resident supported trying free fares but wanted the council to compare ridership before and after the trial.

3. The proposal would use the town's road repair fund to cover lost fares. Rivera said this would improve roads because fewer drivers would wear them down. She also promised that every planned road repair would still happen, though the fund had no replacement money. Another speaker asked which repairs could proceed with a smaller fund. That question did not prove the plan was bad; it exposed a gap between Rivera's spending promise and the money available. Council members needed to investigate the gap before voting.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why does the survey not support Rivera's claim about nearly everyone in town?

2. What makes Rivera's claim that free fares alone increased trips in the nearby town uncertain?

3. What gap in Rivera's road repair promise does the other speaker identify?

4. Does the question about road repairs prove that the free-fare plan is bad? Explain using the passage.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine someone claims, “If bus trips rise during the free-fare year, the policy has paid for itself.” Write three or four sentences that identify an assumption in this new claim, name evidence needed to test it, and explain how the claim could still be false.

ANSWER KEY

Test the Claim

HIGH SCHOOL · TOT.P.1.2.C

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two claims Rivera makes and circle the evidence she uses to support them. Number two places where her conclusion goes beyond that evidence. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why does the survey not support Rivera's claim about nearly everyone in town?	**It surveyed only current bus riders, so it cannot show what residents who do not ride would do.**
2	What makes Rivera's claim that free fares alone increased trips in the nearby town uncertain?	**The new routes or shopping center could also have increased trips.**
3	What gap in Rivera's road repair promise does the other speaker identify?	**Rivera promises every repair will happen, but her plan takes money from the repair fund without replacing it.**
4	Does the question about road repairs prove that the free-fare plan is bad? Explain using the passage.	**No. It identifies a funding question the council needs to investigate, not proof that the whole plan is bad.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The claim assumes that more trips create savings large enough to cover the policy's costs. I would ask for figures on lost fare revenue, bus operating costs, and any savings from reduced traffic. Trips could rise while the town still spends more than it saves.

Accept other explanations grounded in the passage for questions 2 and 3. For Your Turn, look for a testable assumption and a clear distinction between increased ridership and paying for the policy.