Who Takes Action?

Trace how Oklahoma governments share public responsibilities

USG.C.3.5 "Summarize and explain the relationships and responsibilities among the levels of government.. Explain how local, state, and national governments are involved in cooperatively shaping public policy and responding to public policy issues..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Circle one mention of each level of government, underline one responsibility for each level, and number two ways the levels work together.

When the Water Is Unsafe

1. After a tornado, a broken water main leaves one Oklahoma neighborhood without safe tap water. The city water utility repairs its pipes and tells customers when to boil water. City police direct traffic around flooded streets, while the county sheriff patrols roads outside city limits. County emergency managers help communities share supplies and coordinate with city officials when damage spreads across town boundaries. A city governs its municipality; a county serves a wider area that includes cities and land outside them. Their duties overlap during an emergency, but their offices and service areas are not identical.

2. Oklahoma's Department of Environmental Quality regulates public drinking water systems and checks whether the city's water meets safety requirements. State officials can require a public water system to notify customers about unsafe water. The national Environmental Protection Agency sets minimum drinking water standards under federal law, and Oklahoma enforces its own rules for public systems within that framework. The city operates the utility, the state oversees water quality, and the national government provides the baseline. Sharing test results and public notices helps these levels respond to the same hazard without doing exactly the same job.

3. Oklahoma cities and counties exercise powers granted or limited by state law, even though voters choose many of their officials. The state legislature can change rules that affect local emergency planning, but it does not run every local repair. Residents also have a direct route into state lawmaking. Under Oklahoma's constitution, an initiative petition can place a proposed state law before voters if it meets legal requirements. A referendum petition can send a law passed by the legislature to voters for approval or rejection. These tools shape statewide policy; they do not replace a city utility crew or a county emergency manager.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How do the city's and county's areas of responsibility differ during the storm response? Give one action by each.

2. How do the city's water repair and Oklahoma's water-quality oversight address the same problem in different ways?

3. How do national standards and state enforcement both shape the response to unsafe city water?

4. Why would an initiative petition fit residents who want to propose a new state law, rather than a referendum petition? How do both differ from a local repair?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

A busy state highway cuts through an Oklahoma city, and students want a safer crossing. In four or five sentences, propose roles for city, state, and national governments, explain how two levels could work together, and identify which petition tool residents could use to propose a new statewide crossing rule.

ANSWER KEY

Who Takes Action?

HIGH SCHOOL · USG.C.3.5

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Circle one mention of each level of government, underline one responsibility for each level, and number two ways the levels work together. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How do the city's and county's areas of responsibility differ during the storm response? Give one action by each.	**The city serves its municipality and repairs its water pipes. The county serves a wider area, including land outside cities, where the sheriff patrols roads.**
2	How do the city's water repair and Oklahoma's water-quality oversight address the same problem in different ways?	**The city repairs and operates the water system. Oklahoma checks whether its water meets safety requirements and can require notice to customers.**
3	How do national standards and state enforcement both shape the response to unsafe city water?	**The national government sets minimum drinking water standards. Oklahoma enforces its rules for public water systems within that federal framework.**
4	Why would an initiative petition fit residents who want to propose a new state law, rather than a referendum petition? How do both differ from a local repair?	**An initiative can put a proposed state law before voters; a referendum sends a law already passed by the legislature to voters. Both address statewide policy, not a local repair.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The city could collect residents' concerns and improve sidewalks on its own streets near the highway. Oklahoma's transportation agency could study changes to the state highway crossing. The city and state could coordinate where the sidewalks meet the crossing. The national government could offer safety guidance or grant funding if the project qualifies. Residents seeking a new statewide crossing rule could use an initiative petition because they are proposing a law, not sending a law already passed by the legislature to voters.

Accept other plausible divisions of responsibility that respect state authority over the highway and identify a specific way governments cooperate. For the petition choice, accept an initiative only when the response makes clear that residents are proposing a new state law.