No Special Pass

A city inspection puts equal enforcement to the test

USG.C.6.1 "Evaluate the importance of the rule of law as the principle that all citizens and institutions are to be held accountable to the same laws and consequences."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the rule and its consequences, then circle each place where the city and the theater are treated alike. Number two reasons the passage gives for holding both operators accountable.

Two Blocked Exits

1. On a rainy Friday, an inspector in Harbor City found boxes stacked across the marked fire exit of a private theater. At a city-owned arts center, another inspector found folding chairs blocking a marked fire exit. The city ordinance requires every building open to the public to keep fire exits clear. It sets a $200 fine for each violation and requires the building's operator to clear the exit by the next day. Both operators received the same fine and deadline. Inspectors also took photographs so each operator could check the evidence and challenge an incorrect citation.

2. A council member argued that the arts center should not pay because the city would be moving public money from one account to another. The mayor disagreed: the ordinance contains no exception for city buildings, and changing the rule after an inspection would give the city an advantage unavailable to the theater. The arts center cleared its exit, and the theater moved its boxes. Each could request a hearing to dispute the citation. Neither did. The city posted both citations on its public inspection website, allowing residents to see how the ordinance was enforced.

3. Some residents worried that paying the city's fine would leave less money for art classes. Others said ignoring the violation would invite other operators to ignore exit rules, putting visitors at risk. The penalty did not erase the cost to the public, but it made the city face the consequence written into the ordinance. If an operator had shown that its exit was actually clear, a hearing could have overturned that citation. Applying the same written rule and offering the same chance to contest evidence can protect safety while limiting officials' power to favor themselves.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why would canceling only the arts center's fine conflict with the rule of law?

2. Why does giving both operators the same deadline matter for safety, not just fairness?

3. How does offering both operators a hearing support accountability without requiring the city to uphold every citation?

4. Why might residents object to fining the city, and why does the passage still support enforcing the fine?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Suppose a local rule requires both a city-run school cafeteria and a private deli to stop serving refrigerated food if their refrigerators cannot keep it cold. Both fail an inspection, but an official wants to exempt the cafeteria because students need lunch. In four sentences, evaluate the proposed exemption and suggest a way to feed students while applying the rule to both institutions.

ANSWER KEY

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HIGH SCHOOL · USG.C.6.1

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the rule and its consequences, then circle each place where the city and the theater are treated alike. Number two reasons the passage gives for holding both operators accountable. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why would canceling only the arts center's fine conflict with the rule of law?	**The ordinance has no exception for city buildings. Canceling only the arts center's fine would spare the city a consequence the private theater had to face.**
2	Why does giving both operators the same deadline matter for safety, not just fairness?	**Both blocked exits put visitors at risk. The same next-day deadline requires both operators to remove the danger promptly.**
3	How does offering both operators a hearing support accountability without requiring the city to uphold every citation?	**Both operators can challenge the evidence under the same process. A citation can be overturned if the exit was actually clear, but neither operator gets a special exemption.**
4	Why might residents object to fining the city, and why does the passage still support enforcing the fine?	**Residents might object because the fine could leave less money for art classes. Enforcing it holds the city to the written consequence and discourages operators from ignoring exit rules.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The cafeteria should not be exempt because the same food-safety rule applies to it and the deli. Letting the cafeteria serve food from a failing refrigerator could put students at risk while the deli faces the required consequence. Both should stop serving refrigerated food until their equipment can keep it cold. The school could provide shelf-stable lunches or arrange meals from a kitchen that meets the rule.

Accept answers that distinguish equal application of the rule from an automatic assumption that every citation is correct. For the open task, look for a practical meal alternative that does not exempt the cafeteria from the food-safety requirement.