Paths to Participation

Examine how citizens act in elections and courts

USG.C.8.2.E "Examine other political rights and responsibilities of citizens, including registering to vote, running for office, serving on juries, and participating in political campaigns."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Number these four activities where you find them in the passage: registering to vote, campaigning, running for office, and serving on a jury. Underline actions citizens may choose to take, and circle a legal duty or requirement connected to an activity.

A Garden Proposal and a Jury Summons

1. On a Tuesday evening, the city council in Harbor Point considers whether to replace a vacant lot with a public garden. Several residents want a say in which council members make that decision. Voting can shape who holds office, but eligible voters in most states must register before an election. Registration connects a voter to a voting location and helps officials maintain voter rolls. States set different deadlines and methods, and North Dakota does not require voter registration. Checking your state's election office for its current rules is a practical responsibility, not a guarantee that every election uses the same process.

2. At the meeting, Elena argues that the lot should become a garden. She can volunteer for a council candidate whose plans match hers, distribute campaign information, or ask candidates questions in public. Campaign participation helps citizens advocate for policies, but volunteers should check claims before sharing them and follow applicable campaign rules. Elena could also consider running for a council seat herself if she meets local eligibility requirements and files the required paperwork. Campaigning tries to influence an election; running for office asks voters to choose you to represent them. Neither action guarantees that the garden proposal will pass.

3. Months later, Elena receives a summons for jury service in a court case about damage to a nearby shop. The case has no connection to the garden proposal. Eligible citizens may be called to serve on juries, where they listen to evidence and apply the judge's instructions to reach a verdict. Responding to a summons is a legal duty, although courts may allow postponement or excuse a person under their rules. A juror must judge the case fairly, not vote according to a campaign slogan or favor a popular neighbor. Political participation seeks change; jury service protects fair decisions in individual cases.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How could registration help a Harbor Point resident influence the council decision? Why should the resident check state rules first?

2. Elena wants the garden proposal to become a council priority. How would campaigning for a candidate differ from running for council herself?

3. Why would it be wrong for Elena to use a campaign slogan to decide the shop case if she serves as a juror?

4. Which of Elena's possible actions in the passage are choices, and what must she do if she receives a jury summons?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Choose a local issue other than the garden proposal. In one paragraph of five or six sentences, explain how a citizen could use registering to vote, campaigning, and running for office to address it, including a rule the citizen would need to check. Explain why jury service has a different purpose and what a citizen must do if summoned.

ANSWER KEY

Paths to Participation

HIGH SCHOOL · USG.C.8.2.E

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Number these four activities where you find them in the passage: registering to vote, campaigning, running for office, and serving on a jury. Underline actions citizens may choose to take, and circle a legal duty or requirement connected to an activity. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How could registration help a Harbor Point resident influence the council decision? Why should the resident check state rules first?	**Registration can allow an eligible resident to vote for council members. The resident should check state rules because registration requirements, methods, and deadlines vary.**
2	Elena wants the garden proposal to become a council priority. How would campaigning for a candidate differ from running for council herself?	**Campaigning would help a candidate who shares her position win. Running would ask voters to choose Elena to represent them, if she meets local requirements and files the paperwork.**
3	Why would it be wrong for Elena to use a campaign slogan to decide the shop case if she serves as a juror?	**Jurors must decide the individual case fairly using the evidence and the judge's instructions, not campaign goals.**
4	Which of Elena's possible actions in the passage are choices, and what must she do if she receives a jury summons?	**She may choose to campaign or seek office. She must respond to the jury summons, though court rules may allow postponement or an excuse.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I want my town to add a marked crosswalk near the high school. In a state that requires voter registration, I would check my election office's rules and register before the deadline so I could vote for council candidates who support it. I could volunteer for one candidate's campaign and share accurate information about the proposal. If I met local eligibility requirements, I could file the paperwork to run for council and make the crosswalk part of my platform. Jury service is different because jurors decide cases from evidence, not campaign goals. If summoned, I would respond and, if selected, follow the judge's instructions and remain impartial.

Accept different local issues and reasonable examples of campaign activity. Responses should distinguish voluntary political action from the duty to respond to a jury summons and should not describe jury service as a way to advance a policy goal.