# Crossing the Divide

Weigh perspectives and public process in a local decision

**USG.P.1.1.A** "Evaluate the impact of perspectives, civil discourse, and democratic principles on addressing civic issues."

NAME _____ DATE _____

## 1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

**YOUR JOB** Underline one concern from each perspective, circle two moments that keep the discussion civil, and number two steps that make the council's decision accountable. Use your marks to evaluate how the council addresses the crossing problem.

### A Safer Way Across

1. At the corner of Maple Avenue and Third Street, students cross four lanes to reach the public library. After two near misses, residents ask the city council to add a signal. Maya, a student, says a signal would give walkers a clear turn to cross. Mr. Chen, who runs a bakery nearby, worries that cars waiting at the signal could block his delivery entrance. A bus driver adds that a long wait might delay the route used by workers. All three want a safer street, but they experience the corner differently. Their views reveal effects a single proposal might miss.

2. At a public meeting, the council chair gives each speaker two minutes and asks people to address the proposal rather than attack one another. Maya brings counts of students who cross after school. Mr. Chen describes the times his deliveries arrive, and the driver explains the bus schedule. When someone calls business owners selfish, Maya asks the room to consider the delivery problem instead of judging motives. Council members ask the traffic engineer about a shorter signal cycle and a marked loading space on the side street. These questions turn a heated exchange into a search for workable options.

3. The council must hold a public vote, but it does not have to choose between a full signal and doing nothing. Members propose a signal timed to the busiest crossing hours, a loading space on the side street, and a review after three months. Two residents still prefer a pedestrian bridge because they fear any signal will slow traffic. The council records their objections before voting for the trial plan. The plan might make crossing safer while limiting delays, but the review will matter: if bus trips slow sharply or drivers ignore the signal, the council may need to change it.

## 2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How do Maya's and Mr. Chen's perspectives reveal different possible effects of a signal?

2. How does Maya's response to the insult help the group work toward a solution?

3. How do the speaking rule and the recorded objections support a fair decision when residents disagree?

4. Evaluate the trial plan. Which concern does it address, and what remaining risk makes the review important?

## 3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

A town wants to turn an empty lot into a public basketball court, but nearby residents worry about evening noise. In five or six sentences, recommend a plan that considers both perspectives, proposes a civil way to discuss the issue, and explains how public input and a fair decision process could shape the plan.

ANSWER KEY

# Crossing the Divide

HIGH SCHOOL · USG.P.1.1.A

## PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one concern from each perspective, circle two moments that keep the discussion civil, and number two steps that make the council's decision accountable. Use your marks to evaluate how the council addresses the crossing problem. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

## PART 2 · ANSWERS

| # | QUESTION | ANSWER |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | How do Maya's and Mr. Chen's perspectives reveal different possible effects of a signal? | **Maya expects a safer crossing for walkers. Mr. Chen worries that waiting cars could block his bakery's delivery entrance.** |
| 2 | How does Maya's response to the insult help the group work toward a solution? | **She redirects attention from judging business owners to considering the delivery problem, which the council then explores through a possible side-street loading space.** |
| 3 | How do the speaking rule and the recorded objections support a fair decision when residents disagree? | **The speaking rule gives each person a chance to address the proposal without attacks. Recording objections shows that the council considers dissent before its public vote.** |
| 4 | Evaluate the trial plan. Which concern does it address, and what remaining risk makes the review important? | **The timed signal addresses crossing safety, while the side-street loading space addresses deliveries. The review is important because bus trips might still slow or drivers might ignore the signal.** |

## PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The court could give young people a free place to play, while neighbors may lose quiet evenings. I would propose daytime and early evening hours, with posted closing times. At a public meeting, each group could describe its needs without insults and ask questions about noise. The town could invite written comments from people who cannot attend. Council members should explain their criteria, then vote in public on a trial plan. After one month, they could review noise complaints and court use before deciding whether to change the hours.

Accept other passage-supported evaluations of the trial plan and its risks. For the open task, look for both perspectives, a specific civil discussion method, and a decision process shaped by public input.