The Fare Question

Weigh evidence before making a policy claim

USG.P.1.2 "Develop practices which demonstrate an understanding that social studies involves the evaluation of evidence. Develop, investigate, and evaluate plausible answers to essential questions that reflect enduring understandings across time..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two pieces of evidence both analysts could use, circle one limit of the evidence, and number two different explanations for the rise in boardings. Use your marks to compare what the evidence shows with what each analyst concludes.

Should Route 4 Stay Free?

1. In the fictional city of Harbor City, the council made Route 4 buses free for a two-month trial. The transit agency's automatic counters recorded 1,200 weekly boardings during the two months before the trial and 1,500 during the trial. A boarding is one trip onto a bus, not one distinct rider. During the same period, a new apartment building opened near the route. The council's essential question is whether free fares improved access enough to justify continuing the policy. A supporting question is whether the fare change, rather than another change, caused the rise in boardings.

2. The agency's transportation analyst argues that the 25 percent rise in boardings supports keeping free fares. She also cites a city survey: 48 of 80 riders who chose to answer said they took a trip they would not have taken if they had paid. A city budget analyst agrees that boardings increased, but notes that the counters cannot identify new riders or explain why trips increased. He cautions that the survey reflects only volunteers and that the new building may have added riders. He uses the $12,000 collected in fares before the trial to estimate revenue lost during the trial.

3. Neither analyst has proved whether the trial should continue. The transportation analyst's argument assumes that most added boardings resulted from free fares; the budget analyst's estimate assumes past fare collections predict future revenue. Council members could compare Route 4 with a similar route whose fare stayed the same, while checking whether housing changed near either route. They could also ask a randomly selected group of riders about trips they could not otherwise afford and compare operating costs with documented benefits. These steps would test competing explanations rather than treating one appealing number as a final answer.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why does the increase from 1,200 to 1,500 weekly boardings not prove that free fares caused the increase? Give two reasons from the passage.

2. State one point the analysts agree on and one way their interpretations differ.

3. How does the way riders entered the survey limit what the council can conclude from the 48 responses?

4. What assumption does the budget analyst make when estimating lost revenue, and what detail in the passage gives reason to question it?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write four sentences about a possible effect of the Route 4 trial that the passage does not investigate: pose a supporting question, identify two specific evidence sources, describe a possible disagreement between them, and explain how you would check it before deciding.

ANSWER KEY

The Fare Question

HIGH SCHOOL · USG.P.1.2

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two pieces of evidence both analysts could use, circle one limit of the evidence, and number two different explanations for the rise in boardings. Use your marks to compare what the evidence shows with what each analyst concludes. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why does the increase from 1,200 to 1,500 weekly boardings not prove that free fares caused the increase? Give two reasons from the passage.	**The counters record trips, not distinct riders or causes. The new apartment building may also have increased boardings.**
2	State one point the analysts agree on and one way their interpretations differ.	**Both agree that boardings increased. The transportation analyst sees the increase as support for keeping free fares, while the budget analyst cautions that other factors may explain it.**
3	How does the way riders entered the survey limit what the council can conclude from the 48 responses?	**Riders chose whether to answer, so the responses may not represent all Route 4 riders.**
4	What assumption does the budget analyst make when estimating lost revenue, and what detail in the passage gives reason to question it?	**He assumes past fare collections predict revenue during the trial. Boardings rose and a new apartment building opened, so the number of potential paying trips may have changed.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Did the Route 4 trial make buses less reliable for people traveling to work? I would examine the transit agency's trip cancellation records and dated arrival logs collected by a neighborhood group. The agency might report few cancellations while the group's logs show many late arrivals. I would compare dates and check how each source defines a service problem, since a late bus is not necessarily a canceled bus.

Accept other passage-supported limits and competing explanations. For the open task, look for a new supporting question, two identifiable sources, a plausible disagreement, and a way to investigate it.