The Curb Debate

Weighing perspectives in a public decision

USH.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 two different perspectives, circle a moment when speakers respond to an opposing idea, and number two actions that make the decision open to public input or review.

Where Should the Bus Stop?

1. At a city council meeting, residents debated a proposal to move an evening bus stop from a dim side street to the entrance of a public library. Riders who worked late said the new location would shorten their walk under streetlights. A nearby shop owner worried that buses stopping at the curb would block deliveries. A wheelchair user pointed out that the library entrance had a curb ramp, while the old stop did not. Each speaker described a real effect, but no single account covered everyone who used the street. The council had to weigh access, safety, and business needs.

2. The meeting chair gave each speaker two minutes and asked people to respond to ideas rather than insult one another. When the shop owner described delivery times, a rider suggested keeping the loading zone open before 6 p.m. The owner agreed that most deliveries arrived earlier but noted that some came later. Instead of dismissing the owner's concern, council members asked transit staff whether buses could stop beyond the loading zone. Staff said that spot could work if the curb ramp remained clear. The exchange turned opposing claims into a design question officials could investigate.

3. Before voting, the council posted the proposed stop location and accepted written comments from people unable to attend. Several comments asked for brighter lighting, so the council funded a light as part of a three-month trial. It approved the new stop beyond the loading zone and directed staff to record complaints about blocked deliveries and accessibility. The vote was public, and the trial had a date for review. Riders gained a safer route, but late deliveries could still face delays. By revisiting the decision with evidence, the council left room to correct a problem that the hearing could not fully predict.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the wheelchair user's perspective add to the council's understanding of the issue?

2. How did the exchange between the rider and shop owner help the council seek a solution?

3. How did written comments and a public vote make the decision-making process more open than the meeting alone?

4. What is one benefit and one remaining risk of the trial, and how could the planned review help?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Your town is considering lighting a park basketball court after dark. In five or six sentences, propose a fair decision process that includes players and nearby residents, shows civil discourse, and explains how officials would test and review a compromise.

ANSWER KEY

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HIGH SCHOOL · USH.P.1.1.A

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two different perspectives, circle a moment when speakers respond to an opposing idea, and number two actions that make the decision open to public input or review. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the wheelchair user's perspective add to the council's understanding of the issue?	**It raised access to a curb ramp as a concern. The old stop lacked one, and the new stop needed to keep the ramp clear.**
2	How did the exchange between the rider and shop owner help the council seek a solution?	**The rider proposed keeping the loading zone open before 6 p.m. The owner explained that some deliveries came later, which led the council to ask whether buses could stop beyond the loading zone.**
3	How did written comments and a public vote make the decision-making process more open than the meeting alone?	**Written comments let people who could not attend participate and brought lighting concerns to the council. A public vote let people see the decision.**
4	What is one benefit and one remaining risk of the trial, and how could the planned review help?	**Riders gained a safer route, but late deliveries might still face delays. The council could use complaints recorded during the trial to decide whether to change the stop.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The town should invite players and nearby residents to a public meeting and accept written comments from people who cannot attend. Players could explain when they need the court, while neighbors could describe concerns about noise. A chair should give each group equal speaking time and ask speakers to address ideas without personal attacks. Officials could try shielded lights that turn off at 9 p.m. for one month. They should publish the vote and track court use and noise complaints during the trial. At a public review, they could adjust the hours if the evidence shows a problem.

Accept other passage-supported evaluations, including answers that note the trial did not eliminate every concern. For the open task, look for distinct perspectives, a respectful way to discuss them, public participation, and a testable decision with a plan for review.