Whose Library Hours?

Weigh perspectives, evidence, and public decisions

WG.P.1.1 "Demonstrate an understanding of the virtue of civil discourse to analyze and address real-world problems. 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 concerns, circle two kinds of evidence, and number two steps that let the public take part in the decision.

A Proposal for Later Library Hours

1. At a neighborhood meeting, residents debate whether the public library should stay open until 8 p.m. twice a week. A student says later hours would provide a quiet place to study after practice. A library worker worries that a longer shift without more staff could make closing unsafe. A parent wants the same money spent on weekend hours for families who work nights. Each speaker describes a real need, but none can settle the budget question alone. The city council controls the library budget, so residents must make a proposal that officials can review and the public can question.

2. Before voting on a recommendation, the neighborhood group gathers evidence. Library staff provide a count of visitors during the final hour on current weekdays, while the city posts the estimated cost of paying staff for later hours. Students collect signatures, but they notice that most signers attend the same school. To hear from people who cannot attend evening meetings, the group offers paper surveys at the library and asks a local community center to share them. Survey answers show preferences, not proof that a schedule will increase library use. Comparing costs, attendance counts, and comments helps the group test competing claims.

3. At the next meeting, the moderator asks speakers to state the other side's concern before replying. Members agree not to interrupt and publish a summary of comments, including objections. Instead of promising permanent late hours, they recommend a six-week trial on two weekdays, with paid staffing and a published cost limit. The library would record visits during the new hours and invite feedback from staff and patrons. The council would hold a public hearing before deciding whether to continue, change, or end the trial. This process does not guarantee agreement, but it gives officials a way to weigh evidence and explain their decision.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does the proposed trial respond to both the student's and the library worker's concerns?

2. Why would the students' signatures alone be weak evidence of community support? How does the group try to hear from more people?

3. What can the city's cost estimate tell the group that survey answers cannot? What can the surveys tell the group that the estimate cannot?

4. How do the published summary and public hearing help the council make a democratic decision, even if residents still disagree?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Choose a community issue other than library hours. In four or five sentences, describe two perspectives, two kinds of information you would seek, one limit of that information, and a possible group action that includes a public decision step.

ANSWER KEY

Whose Library Hours?

HIGH SCHOOL · WG.P.1.1

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two different concerns, circle two kinds of evidence, and number two steps that let the public take part in the decision. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does the proposed trial respond to both the student's and the library worker's concerns?	**It tests later hours for students while providing paid staffing to address the worker's safety concern.**
2	Why would the students' signatures alone be weak evidence of community support? How does the group try to hear from more people?	**Most signers attend one school, so they may not reflect the wider community. The group offers library surveys and asks a community center to share them.**
3	What can the city's cost estimate tell the group that survey answers cannot? What can the surveys tell the group that the estimate cannot?	**The estimate shows the expected staffing cost. Surveys show people's schedule preferences, though they cannot prove that use will increase.**
4	How do the published summary and public hearing help the council make a democratic decision, even if residents still disagree?	**The summary makes comments and objections visible, and the hearing gives the public a chance to speak before the council decides.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

At the community park, evening walkers want brighter paths, while nearby residents worry that new lights would shine into their homes. I would ask both groups which locations concern them, but their answers might miss people who avoid the park entirely. I would also request the parks department's price estimates, checking whether they include electricity and maintenance. Residents could discuss a short trial of shielded lights at a public meeting before the parks department decides. During the trial, the department could track costs and collect comments, then publicly explain whether to keep or change the lights.

Accept other passage-supported explanations that distinguish a speaker's preference from evidence about costs or use. For Part 3, accept feasible community issues and decision processes that give affected people a chance to participate.