

A Requirement Worth Debating

Research, challenge assumptions, and synthesize a decision.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.1 "Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11-12 topics, texts, and issues..."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two stated limits on time or supervision in paragraph 1. Circle one claim in paragraph 2 that outside evidence could support or challenge.

Case file: Community service and graduation

- ① Fictional Cedar High is considering a requirement of 20 community-service hours before graduation. The proposal permits approved school-day projects, outside placements and accessible alternatives. A coordinator can supervise 15 students each week for two hours during a 12-week term. There are 60 students in the pilot. The school has no data yet on demand for each placement or on students' paid work and caregiving schedules. The task is to recommend adoption, rejection or a revised pilot; no option is assumed correct.
- ② Student editor Mara supports the goal: "A shared requirement could introduce students to community work they might never try. School-day projects could make participation more accessible." Student editor Eli disagrees: "A requirement could turn service into compliance. School-day places also appear too limited for everyone to complete all 20 hours there." These are fictional viewpoints, not research findings. The coordinator's total capacity is 360 student-hours per term; 60 students completing 20 hours would need 1,200. That difference does not prove all students need school-day places.

- ③ Before discussion, investigate a question raised by this case. Required source 1: Montgomery County Public Schools, Frequently Asked Questions about Student Service Learning, at <https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/ssl/pages/faq/> . Read how students earn hours and another relevant section. Find a second credible published source addressing your question. Use teacher-arranged web access or library access to these sources. Record each title, author or organization, date, page or section, and link or publication details. Gather a finding from each actual source and compare their contexts with Cedar. The MCPS page describes a real program; it is not an evaluation of the program's outcomes. Do not invent research findings.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE Use the passage

- ① Read the required source in paragraph 3. Record its citation, a relevant finding and a limit on applying it to Cedar.

- ② Find and read a second credible source addressing your question. Record its citation, a finding and a limit. Compare the findings from both sources.

- ③ Prepare a recommendation using a case detail and a researched finding. Explain the connection. Write a question about an assumption or evidence gap.

- 4** Discuss with a partner for six minutes. Each learner explains an evidence-based position, probes reasoning, responds to a challenge and proposes an alternative. Record a question, its reply and a resulting qualification.

- 5** In a new group of 3-4, agree on turns and a decision rule. Assign facilitator, timer, recorder and evidence checker; combine facilitator/timer in threes. Aim for a recommendation in twelve minutes. Everyone includes another perspective, tests a claim with evidence and replies. Record a contradiction and its resolution or remaining uncertainty.

3 YOUR TURN ————— Your own words

Join a fifteen-minute teacher-led circle of 6-8 with members of different groups. Each learner synthesizes competing views, responds to a peer and identifies needed follow-up research. Then write an individual conclusion.

Circle evidence

Record two different views you heard, how you connected or challenged them, and a peer's response.

Your qualified conclusion

State your recommendation using case and researched evidence. Synthesize the strongest points on both sides. Explain one resolved or unresolved contradiction and the next research question.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline two stated limits on time or supervision in paragraph 1. Circle one claim in paragraph 2 that outside evidence could support or challenge. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Read the required source in paragraph 3. Record its citation, a relevant finding and a limit on applying it to Cedar.	Check a retrievable source, faithful finding and specific limit. Include title, author/organization, date, locator and link or publication details.
2	Find and read a second credible source addressing your question. Record its citation, a finding and a limit. Compare the findings from both sources.	Require a distinct credible second source and accurate finding. Compare the sources while respecting context differences. The assigned MCPS source supplies an actual-program example; students still inspect it themselves.
3	Prepare a recommendation using a case detail and a researched finding. Explain the connection. Write a question about an assumption or evidence gap.	Accept any supported recommendation with an explicit reasoning link and question. The capacity gap alone cannot establish how many students need school-day places.
4	Discuss with a partner for six minutes. Each learner explains an evidence-based position, probes reasoning, responds to a challenge and proposes an alternative. Record a question, its reply and a resulting qualification.	Observe all four moves from each learner. The record must connect an actual question, relevant reply and effect on reasoning.
5	In a new group of 3-4, agree on turns and a decision rule. Assign facilitator, timer, recorder and evidence checker; combine facilitator/timer in threes. Aim for a recommendation in twelve minutes. Everyone includes another perspective, tests a claim with evidence and replies. Record a contradiction and its resolution or remaining uncertainty.	Observe every learner and the agreed procedures. Distinguish the numerical shortfall from unknown demand. Accept unresolved disagreement if supported by evidence.

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Circle record (illustrative): One peer favored a shared service experience; another worried about students with jobs. I connected those concerns by asking whether course-based service could broaden access. A peer replied that Cedar has not measured how many students need school-day places.

Conclusion: I recommend a voluntary pilot while Cedar measures demand. A shared program might introduce students to service, but requiring hours without enough accessible places could burden some learners. Montgomery County Public Schools lists both course-based and outside-school ways to earn service-learning hours (MCPS, Frequently Asked Questions, "How can MCPS students earn SSL hours?", no date). That real program suggests a design to investigate; it does not prove Cedar has the same resources or that a requirement improves motivation. The case resolves one claim: 360 school-day student-hours cannot cover all 1,200 hours. Actual demand remains unknown. Next, survey students' scheduling needs and verify how many suitable placements can serve them.

Model source: Montgomery County Public Schools, Frequently Asked Questions, section named above, accessed September 9, 2026. <https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/ssl/pages/faq/>

TEACHER ASSESSMENT NOTES

Arrange research access and preparation time before discussion. Allow multiple lessons so every learner participates in partner, group and teacher-led formats. Assess accurate use of case and research, clear persuasive expression, responsive questioning, inclusion, synthesis, resolution where possible and follow-up inquiry. Students supply two independently inspected sources; the teacher-only example does not replace their research. Its exchange is illustrative; the MCPS program information is real. Verify each learner's sources and live participation.