

A Fair Fix

Trace a group decision from problem to review.

4.22 "Social studies skills. The student uses problem-solving and decision-making skills, working independently and with others. The student is expected to: use democratic procedures to simulate making decisions on school, local..."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Number the decision-making actions in the order they happened, starting with identifying the problem and ending with checking the results.

The Water Fountain Line

- ① At Oak Hill School, students noticed that the playground water fountain often had a long line after recess. The student council decided to use a problem-solving process. First, members named the problem: students lost class time while waiting for water. Next, they gathered information by watching the fountain for five days and asking classes when they used it.
- ② Council members listed three options. They could add a second fountain, ask some classes to use a nearby fountain, or set up a water-break schedule. They considered advantages and disadvantages. A second fountain would help many students, but it would cost money. A schedule would cost nothing, but some students might forget their assigned time.
- ③ After discussion, the council voted by secret ballot. Each member chose the option he or she thought would work best. The water-break schedule received the most votes, so the council asked teachers to try it for two weeks. Then members counted late returns to class and asked students for comments. They would use those results to decide whether the schedule solved the problem or needed changes.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What problem did the council identify? What information did members gather before choosing a solution?

2 What were the council's three options for solving the problem?

3 What advantage and disadvantage did the council see in adding a second fountain?

4 How did the council make its choice fairly? How did members plan to evaluate the solution?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Choose a different school problem. Write a decision-making plan that names the problem, tells how you would gather information, gives two options with one advantage and disadvantage for each, explains a fair vote, and tells how you would check whether the chosen solution worked.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Number the decision-making actions in the order they happened, starting with identifying the problem and ending with checking the results. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What problem did the council identify? What information did members gather before choosing a solution?	The long fountain line caused students to lose class time. Members watched the fountain for five days and asked classes when they used it.
2	What were the council's three options for solving the problem?	Add a second fountain, ask some classes to use a nearby fountain, or set up a water-break schedule.
3	What advantage and disadvantage did the council see in adding a second fountain?	It would help many students, but it would cost money.
4	How did the council make its choice fairly? How did members plan to evaluate the solution?	They voted by secret ballot. They planned to count late returns to class and ask students for comments.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Problem: The library has too few open seats at lunch. I would count how many students need seats and ask students what they need. Options are opening a quiet classroom or using 15-minute library turns. A classroom gives more seats but needs a teacher. Turns need no extra room but may disappoint students. After discussion, students would vote by secret ballot. If the classroom wins, a teacher would open it for two weeks. Then we would count available seats and survey students to see if the plan worked.

Accept any realistic school problem and a complete plan that includes information gathering, options with advantages and disadvantages, a democratic procedure, implementation, and evaluation. Students may use a different fair voting method, such as a show of hands, if all group members can participate.