

Your Voice Matters

See how civic participation connects people to public decisions.

5.17.A “explain why individuals have a duty to participate in civic affairs at the local, state, and national levels;”

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline three sentences that explain why people have a duty to participate in civic affairs. In the margin, write L, S, or N beside an action or decision at the local, state, or national level.

Taking Part in Public Life

- ① Living in a community gives people both rights and responsibilities. Civic affairs are public matters that affect everyone, such as safety, schools, parks, laws, and elections. Individuals have a duty to participate because public decisions shape daily life. When people share ideas and vote, leaders learn what residents need. Participation also helps protect the rights of people whose voices might otherwise be missed.
- ② At the local level, a town council may decide whether to keep a library open later in the evening. A student cannot vote yet, but can attend a public meeting with family, write a respectful comment, or tell an adult about the need for study space. These actions give local officials information before they spend community money.
- ③ State and national decisions also matter. State lawmakers can make rules for public schools, while Congress passes laws for the country. In elections, eligible citizens vote for people who will represent them. People can also contact representatives, learn about issues, and join peaceful community efforts. Taking part at each level makes government more representative and helps citizens hold leaders accountable.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 Why does participation help leaders make public decisions?

2 Name one way a student can participate in the library decision. How could that action help local officials?

3 What state-level decision and what national-level decision are named in the passage?

4 According to the passage, how does taking part at local, state, and national levels improve government?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Choose one civic issue that affects your community. Write exactly three sentences that name the level of government involved, describe one way you could participate, and explain why you have a duty to take part.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline three sentences that explain why people have a duty to participate in civic affairs. In the margin, write L, S, or N beside an action or decision at the local, state, or national level. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why does participation help leaders make public decisions?	Participation helps leaders learn what residents need and gives officials information before they spend community money.
2	Name one way a student can participate in the library decision. How could that action help local officials?	A student could attend a public meeting with family, write a respectful comment, or tell an adult about the need for study space. This gives local officials information about what residents need.
3	What state-level decision and what national-level decision are named in the passage?	State lawmakers can make rules for public schools. Congress can pass laws for the country.
4	According to the passage, how does taking part at local, state, and national levels improve government?	It makes government more representative and helps citizens hold leaders accountable.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Our town should add a crosswalk near the playground. This is a local issue, so I could share my idea at a town council meeting or write a respectful comment. I have a duty to participate because the decision affects safety and officials need residents' ideas before spending community money.

Accept equivalent explanations that participation informs leaders, represents community needs, protects rights, or holds leaders accountable. For the open response, accept a reasonable civic issue, the correct government level, a realistic participation action, and a clear reason for participating.