

Voices Shape Decisions

Read how citizens contact leaders and make group choices.

5.17 "Citizenship. The student understands the importance of individual participation in the democratic process at the local, state, and national levels..."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two reasons civic participation matters, circle four ways to contact a leader, and number the three steps for making a group decision by voting.

A Voice at Every Level

- ① Citizens help shape public life when they pay attention, share ideas, and work with others. At the local level, a town council may decide about parks, libraries, or streets. State leaders make decisions about areas such as public schools and roads. National leaders address issues that affect the whole country. Participation helps leaders learn what people need and value.
- ② People can contact leaders respectfully by letter, email, phone call, or public comment at a meeting. Start by naming the issue, explain your reason, and ask for a response. A mayor, governor, or member of Congress is elected by voters. A city manager or a state agency director may be appointed, meaning chosen for the job by another government leader or group.
- ③ When a class, club, or neighborhood group must choose one plan, voting can help it decide fairly. First, members should hear the choices and discuss facts. Then each eligible group member casts one vote. The choice with the most votes can become the group decision, if the group agreed to that rule first. Voting gives each voter a voice and helps the group move forward.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 Why is it important for citizens to participate in civic affairs at local, state, and national levels?

2 Name two ways to contact a leader. What three parts should your message include?

3 Which leaders in the passage are elected, and which leaders may be appointed?

4 What should a group do before and during a vote so voting can help make a fair decision?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Create a plan for your class to vote on one choice. Write four sentences that name the two choices, tell what students will do before voting, explain how each student will vote, and state the rule for choosing the winner.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline two reasons civic participation matters, circle four ways to contact a leader, and number the three steps for making a group decision by voting. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why is it important for citizens to participate in civic affairs at local, state, and national levels?	Participation helps leaders learn what people need and value. Leaders at each level make decisions that affect people.
2	Name two ways to contact a leader. What three parts should your message include?	Students may name letter, email, phone call, or public comment at a meeting. The message should name the issue, explain a reason, and ask for a response.
3	Which leaders in the passage are elected, and which leaders may be appointed?	A mayor, governor, and member of Congress are elected. A city manager and a state agency director may be appointed.
4	What should a group do before and during a vote so voting can help make a fair decision?	Members should hear the choices and discuss facts. Each eligible member casts one vote, and the group agrees on the rule, such as choosing the option with the most votes, before voting.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Our class will vote on whether to hold a book swap or a board-game afternoon. First, we will hear facts about both choices. Each student will cast one private vote on a paper ballot. We agreed that the choice with the most votes will win, so every student has a voice.

Accept equivalent respectful contact methods and accurate explanations of elected versus appointed leaders. For the open task, accept any realistic two-choice voting plan that includes discussion, one vote per student, and a stated decision rule.