

Voices in Government

Read how residents help representative government work.

6.12.A “identify and explain the duty of civic participation in societies with representative governments; and”

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline three actions residents can take to participate in government, and circle two phrases that show how participants should act responsibly.

A Community Voice

- ① In a representative government, people elect officials to make many decisions for the community. This system works best when residents do more than wait for election day. Civic participation means taking part in public life in responsible ways. Eligible citizens can learn about candidates and issues, vote, and encourage others to understand choices. Residents can also follow laws, pay required taxes, and respect the rights of people whose views differ from their own. These actions support shared self-government.
- ② Between elections, people can communicate with representatives, attend public meetings, join community groups, or speak during public comment. For example, a city council may consider adding safer crossings near a middle school. A resident who reads the proposal, asks a clear question, and shares evidence about busy traffic helps officials understand community needs. Participation is not only agreeing with a decision. People may respectfully support, question, or suggest changes to a proposal. They should listen to other speakers.
- ③ Civic participation carries duties as well as rights. Participants should use reliable information, state their views honestly, and avoid threats or false claims. They should listen when others speak, even during disagreement. Representatives must weigh many needs, so one message may not decide an issue. Still, informed and respectful participation gives officials information about the people they serve. By voting, communicating, and working with others, residents help keep representative government connected to the community every day.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 Name two ways eligible citizens can participate in a representative government.

2 How could a resident's actions about the safer-crossings proposal help city council members make a decision?

3 What should people do when they disagree about a public proposal?

4 Why might one message not decide an issue, and why is participation still important?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Choose a school or community issue. Write a respectful three-sentence message to a representative that states your view, gives one piece of relevant evidence, and makes a clear request.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline three actions residents can take to participate in government, and circle two phrases that show how participants should act responsibly. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Name two ways eligible citizens can participate in a representative government.	Answers may include learning about candidates and issues, voting, encouraging others to understand choices, communicating with representatives, attending public meetings, joining community groups, or speaking during public comment.
2	How could a resident's actions about the safer-crossings proposal help city council members make a decision?	By reading the proposal, asking a clear question, and sharing evidence about busy traffic, the resident gives officials information about community needs.
3	What should people do when they disagree about a public proposal?	They should respectfully support, question, or suggest changes, and listen when other people speak.
4	Why might one message not decide an issue, and why is participation still important?	Representatives must weigh many needs, so one message may not decide an issue. Participation still gives officials information about the people they serve and keeps government connected to the community.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Dear Council Member Lee, I support a covered bike rack at Riverside Park because students often leave bikes in the rain after soccer practice. Please ask the parks department to study costs and possible locations. I understand the city has many needs, and I would listen respectfully to other ideas.

Accept reasonable examples of civic participation that match the passage. For the open response, check for exactly three sentences, a stated view, relevant evidence, a clear request, and respectful language.