

Council Choices

Trace how a civic group makes and reviews a fair decision.

6.22 "Social studies skills. The student uses problem-solving and decision-making skills, working independently and with others. The student is expected to: describe governmental and democratic processes such as voting, due process..."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the six decision-making actions in the passage, numbering them 1 through 6 in order. Circle each governmental process, such as a caucus, voting, or due process, to show how it supports a fair decision.

A Lunch Line Decision

- ① In a civics simulation, Riverside Middle students acted as a town council. They identified a problem: long lunch lines left some students without enough time to eat. Next, teams gathered information by timing lines for five days and asking students and cafeteria workers about the causes. The teams listed options: add a serving station, change release times, or offer a grab-and-go meal. Before choosing, they considered each option's advantages and disadvantages, including cost, fairness, and how quickly it could begin.
- ② Council members then met in caucuses, small groups that discussed the options and planned what to support. In this model, each caucus selected a spokesperson, but every council member later had one vote. During a public meeting, speakers explained evidence for the choices. The council voted to change release times for a two-week trial. This choice cost little and could begin quickly, although students in later classes might have less time before lunch. The principal approved the plan, and staff put it into action Monday.
- ③ After the first week, students said the new schedule treated later classes unfairly. The council used due process, fair procedures that protect people's rights. Students received notice of the complaint, could explain their views, and spoke to a review group that had not made the original decision. The group compared new line times, survey results, and missed-meal reports with the earlier information. It found that lines moved faster, but later classes lost eating time. The council revised the schedule, then planned another review after two weeks to evaluate whether the solution worked.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What problem did the council identify, and what two ways did teams gather information about it?

2 How did caucuses and the final vote give council members different ways to participate in the decision?

3 What solution did the council choose? Give one advantage and one disadvantage of that choice.

4 Name two due process actions the council used after the complaint. What evidence did the review group use to evaluate the trial?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Choose a school problem you want to solve. Write six numbered sentences that identify the problem, gather information, list options, compare advantages and disadvantages, choose and implement a solution through a caucus and vote, and evaluate the result. Then add a seventh sentence that describes a fair due-process action if someone is accused of not following the new plan.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline the six decision-making actions in the passage, numbering them 1 through 6 in order. Circle each governmental process, such as a caucus, voting, or due process, to show how it supports a fair decision. 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, and what two ways did teams gather information about it?	The problem was long lunch lines that left some students without enough time to eat. Teams timed lines for five days and asked students and cafeteria workers about causes.
2	How did caucuses and the final vote give council members different ways to participate in the decision?	In caucuses, members discussed options and planned what to support, and each caucus selected a spokesperson. In the public meeting, every council member had one vote.
3	What solution did the council choose? Give one advantage and one disadvantage of that choice.	The council chose to change release times for a two-week trial. It cost little and could begin quickly, but students in later classes might have less time before lunch.
4	Name two due process actions the council used after the complaint. What evidence did the review group use to evaluate the trial?	Students received notice of the complaint, could explain their views, and spoke to a review group that had not made the original decision. The group used new line times, survey results, and missed-meal reports.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

1. The problem is that too much litter is left on the playground after lunch. 2. Students will count litter in three playground areas for one week and ask custodians where they find the most trash. 3. Our options are adding more bins, assigning cleanup teams, or starting a reusable-container campaign. 4. More bins are easy to use but cost money, while cleanup teams cost little but take student time. 5. In caucuses, students will discuss the options, and then the council will vote to add bins near the benches and implement the plan next month. 6. After two weeks, the council will compare litter counts with the first week's counts and survey custodians to evaluate the plan. 7. If a student is accused of ignoring the cleanup rule, the student will receive notice of the concern and a chance to explain to an adult who did not make the accusation.

Accept equivalent descriptions of the six decision-making actions and the three governmental processes when they match the passage. For the open response, accept reasonable school problems and solutions that include evidence gathering, option comparison, a caucus and vote, evaluation evidence, and a fair opportunity to respond to an accusation.