

Fair Choice Lab

Read how a school council models democratic decision-making.

7.23.A “describe governmental and democratic processes such as voting, due process, and caucuses using simulations and models; and”

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline actions that make the council's process fair, and circle each use of voting, due process, or a caucus.

A Council Decision Model

- ① At Cedar Grove Middle School, students used a model to practice making a public decision. The school council had 24 members and needed to choose one project: refill water stations or a shaded lunch area. First, each member heard the same short descriptions of both proposals. Then members received paper ballots, marked one choice privately, and placed ballots in a box. Two student counters, watched by council members, counted the ballots. The group planned to follow the result announced after the count.
- ② Before the vote, Jordan said a council member had removed a poster supporting the lunch-area proposal. The chair did not decide immediately. Jordan was told what concern would be reviewed and could explain what happened. The member named in the concern could also respond. A teacher who had not taken sides checked the poster rule and listened to both students. The teacher found that the poster had been moved by mistake, not removed because of its message. This due process gave both students notice, a chance to be heard, and an impartial review.
- ③ On the next day, council members held two caucuses before taking another practice vote. In a caucus, people with similar views meet to discuss ideas and plan how to persuade others. One group supported water stations and chose speakers to explain health and cost reasons. The other group supported shade and prepared answers about hot days. No official decision was made inside either caucus. Afterward, all members returned to the full council, heard the speakers, and voted as individuals. The model showed that discussion can happen before a vote without replacing each person's ballot.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What two details show that the council's vote was both private and observable?

2 What did Jordan and the other council member each get to do during the due process review?

3 How was a caucus different from the official council vote in this model?

4 How did returning to the full council after the caucuses protect each member's role in the decision?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Design a five-step simulation for choosing one school improvement. In 4 or 5 sentences, include a caucus, a secret-ballot vote, a due process response to a fairness complaint, and a way to announce the result.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline actions that make the council's process fair, and circle each use of voting, due process, or a caucus. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What two details show that the council's vote was both private and observable?	Members marked paper ballots privately and placed them in a box. Two student counters counted the ballots while council members watched.
2	What did Jordan and the other council member each get to do during the due process review?	Jordan was told what concern would be reviewed and could explain what happened. The other member could respond to the concern.
3	How was a caucus different from the official council vote in this model?	A caucus was a meeting for people with similar views to discuss ideas and plan persuasion. The official decision happened later when all members voted as individuals.
4	How did returning to the full council after the caucuses protect each member's role in the decision?	All members heard the speakers and then voted as individuals. The caucuses did not replace each person's ballot.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

First, students who favor each improvement meet in two caucuses and choose one reason to share. Next, the whole group hears both speakers and each student marks one choice on a secret ballot. If someone says a ballot rule was applied unfairly, a neutral reviewer tells the student the concern, hears both sides, and checks the rule. Two counters observed by the group tally the ballots. The group announces the result and follows it.

Accept equivalent descriptions of private voting, observable counting, notice, a chance to respond, and impartial review. For the open task, accept varied school issues if all four required democratic processes or protections are included accurately.