

Decide Fairly

Trace how democratic procedures support a public decision.

7.23 "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 Circle the words *caucuses*, *voted*, and *due process*. Then number the decision-making actions in order from 1 to 6, beginning with naming the problem and ending with evaluating the results.

A Safer Crosswalk

- ① At Lincoln Middle School, students held a model city council meeting about adding lights near a busy crosswalk. Before deciding, the group named the problem: students felt unsafe after afternoon activities. Teams gathered information by reading traffic reports, asking families about pickup times, and counting cars for three days. This step helped them separate evidence from guesses. Council members agreed that a solution should improve safety without blocking buses or costing more than the school could support.
- ② First, students met in caucuses, which were small groups where people discussed ideas and tried to build support for them. One caucus favored a crossing guard, another proposed brighter streetlights, and a third suggested changing pickup routes. Each group listed advantages and disadvantages. A guard could guide students immediately but would require yearly pay. Lights could help every evening but would take time to install. After hearing the caucuses, every council member voted by secret ballot. The lights plan received the most votes.
- ③ The council also used due process, fair procedures that protect people's rights, when a student said the new lights might shine into nearby homes. The student received notice of the meeting and a chance to speak before the council acted. The council chose shielded lights and set an installation date. One month later, students repeated the car count and surveyed walkers. If the crosswalk was still unsafe, the council would reconsider its choice. Evaluating results showed whether the solution worked.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What information did the teams gather before they considered solutions?

2 How did the caucuses and the secret-ballot vote serve different purposes in the meeting?

3 What two protections did due process give the student who was concerned about the lights?

4 How would the council evaluate whether its solution was effective?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Choose a school problem. In 6 sentences, identify the problem, tell what information you would gather, give two options with one advantage or disadvantage for each, choose a solution and explain how you would implement and evaluate it, and include a caucus or vote.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Circle the words *caucuses*, *voted*, and *due process*. Then number the decision-making actions in order from 1 to 6, beginning with naming the problem and ending with evaluating the results. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What information did the teams gather before they considered solutions?	They read traffic reports, asked families about pickup times, and counted cars for three days.
2	How did the caucuses and the secret-ballot vote serve different purposes in the meeting?	Caucuses let small groups discuss ideas and build support. The secret-ballot vote let every council member choose among the ideas.
3	What two protections did due process give the student who was concerned about the lights?	The student received notice of the meeting and a chance to speak before the council acted.
4	How would the council evaluate whether its solution was effective?	Students would repeat the car count and survey walkers one month later. The council would use the results to decide whether the crosswalk was still unsafe and whether to reconsider.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The problem is that the cafeteria has long lunch lines. I would count wait times for one week and ask students and staff about the causes. One option is to open a second serving line, which could shorten waits but needs another worker. A second option is to assign lunch periods by grade, which costs less but may disrupt schedules. Small caucuses would discuss both options, and then students would vote by secret ballot. I would choose staggered lunch periods, try them for a month, and compare new wait times with old times to evaluate the solution.

Accept equivalent evidence from the passage and explanations that accurately distinguish discussion in caucuses from voting. For the open response, accept reasonable school problems that include information gathering, two weighed options, a democratic procedure, implementation, and a measurable evaluation plan.