

Rules Close Home

Examine how local governments are organized and make ordinances.

CE.4.a “describing the structure and powers of the local government and explaining the local lawmaking process;”

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each local service or power, circle each word that names a local government structure or official, and number the four lawmaking steps in order.

A Local Rule Takes Shape

- ① Local government is the level closest to residents. A county, city, or town may provide services people use each day, such as police and fire protection, parks, roads, trash collection, and libraries. Its governing body makes local decisions within powers granted by the state. In Virginia, county voters elect a board of supervisors, while city and town voters elect councils. Local charters and state law help determine how each locality is organized, including whether it has a mayor, manager, or both.
- ② Suppose residents ask for safer crossings near a busy school. A council member or other authorized local official may introduce an ordinance, a local law, about crosswalks or speed rules. First, the governing body considers the proposal. Next, it gives public notice and holds a public hearing, where residents can speak. Then members discuss the ordinance and vote. If the required number supports it, the ordinance is adopted and becomes a local rule. Officials must still follow the U.S. Constitution, Virginia Constitution, and state laws.
- ③ After adoption, local officials carry out the ordinance. For example, transportation staff may plan crossings, and police officers may enforce a lawful traffic rule. Residents can observe meetings, contact elected members, and speak at hearings. Their involvement can shape a proposal before the vote. Local government cannot use an ordinance to take powers that state law does not give it. This limit helps connect local choices to the wider system of laws and protects residents' rights, too.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 How does the elected governing body of a Virginia county differ from the elected governing body of a city or town?

2 Name two services local government may provide. What gives local government the power to make local decisions?

3 List the four steps for an ordinance described in the passage, in order.

4 What are two ways residents can influence a proposal before the governing body votes?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Choose one issue in your community that a town council could address. Write four sentences that name the council, describe a possible ordinance, explain how residents could give input, and tell what must happen before the rule can be carried out.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline each local service or power, circle each word that names a local government structure or official, and number the four lawmaking steps in order. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does the elected governing body of a Virginia county differ from the elected governing body of a city or town?	County voters elect a board of supervisors. City and town voters elect councils.
2	Name two services local government may provide. What gives local government the power to make local decisions?	Answers may include police or fire protection, parks, roads, trash collection, or libraries. The state grants local governments their powers.
3	List the four steps for an ordinance described in the passage, in order.	The governing body considers the proposal; it gives public notice and holds a hearing; members discuss and vote; if the required number supports it, the ordinance is adopted.
4	What are two ways residents can influence a proposal before the governing body votes?	Residents can contact elected members and speak at a public hearing. They may also observe meetings.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The town council could address litter at the public park. It could consider an ordinance requiring visitors to place trash in provided bins. The council would give public notice and hold a hearing so residents could comment. After discussion, council members would vote, and if the required number agreed, park staff could post the new rule.

Accept accurate wording that distinguishes a county board of supervisors from city or town councils and identifies state-granted authority. For the open response, accept any realistic local issue, a lawful ordinance idea, public input before a vote, and adoption by the required vote.