

Case 19: What should Gia say in her two-minute comment?

Overview

Students read a short story in which Gia wants to speak against a proposal to close the park’s lighted courts at 8 p.m. They read the parks committee agenda, the comment instructions and a nearby resident’s comment. They find the item, the deciding body, the deadline and the time limit. They then cut Gia’s three-page draft into a timed comment that makes one specific request.

Before this case

Students should already be able to:

- read an agenda for its item, action and deciding body
- write for two different audiences
- rehearse a timed spoken text

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- plan a group’s input across two stages of a local decision
- write a spoken comment that fits a two-minute limit
- answer the resident’s noise concern with a specific request
- write a follow-up email to the full council, the body that decides

Materials

- This chapter, one copy per participant

Materials, continued

- Evidence A to D and Seattle City Council’s public comment page
- The public-record checklist and a timer

The task in this edition

Task: Prepare the crew’s input on item 4 as a small community group. Write a two-minute spoken comment for the parks committee and a follow-up email to the full council, which receives the committee’s recommendation.

Students make: Spoken comment, 2 minutes (about 260 words), plus a follow-up email of 120–180 words

Pacing

Opener (page 379): 4 min. Short on time: 3 min. Read What happened aloud and go straight to the key terms.

Key terms (pages 380 and 381): 4 min. Short on time: 2 min. Read the key terms aloud. Skip Who is involved.

Look at the evidence (page 386): 7 min. Short on time: 6 min. Participants fill in only the What it shows boxes.

Look at the evidence (page 387): 6 min. Short on time: 5 min. Participants fill in only the What it leaves out boxes.

Key idea (pages 388 and 389): 10 min. Short on time: 6 min. Skip In the news.

Pacing, continued

Sort the evidence (page 390): 6 min. Short on time: skip.

Practice (page 391): 5 min. Short on time: 4 min. Vote on the three openings and skip the marked draft.

Your task (pages 392 and 393): 12 min. Short on time: 12 min.

Your draft (page 394): 25 min. Short on time: 25 min.

Check your work (pages 395 and 396): 8 min. Short on time: 5 min. Participants answer the Check your work questions only.

Questions to discuss (pages 397 and 398): 10 min. Short on time: 7 min. Use question 3 as a closing question.

Talk about this case at home (page 399): at home.

Periods: full chapter 97 minutes; one period 75 minutes.

Standards

Civic Engagement VALUE Rubric AAC&U’s rubric for taking part in community life, including civic communication and working within community structures toward a civic aim. In this case: Students speak to the body that can act on the item and follow the decision to the full council (Civic Contexts/Structures).

Case 19 plan, continued

Standards, continued

Oral Communication VALUE Rubric AAC&U’s rubric for a prepared talk with a clear central message, organization, supporting material and delivery. In this case: Students deliver a timed comment with one central message and one supporting observation (Central Message).

Written Communication VALUE Rubric AAC&U’s rubric for writing that fits its context and purpose, develops its content and uses sources and evidence. In this case: Students write a follow-up email for a different audience than the spoken comment (Context of and Purpose for Writing).

Scholarship as Conversation Experts and communities build knowledge over time through ongoing discussion and disagreement. In this case: Students use research on who comments at local meetings (Einstein, Palmer and Glick, 2018) to decide whose view their comment should acknowledge.

Codes of ethics

- **ASPA Code of Ethics:** 3. Promote democratic participation.
- **Credo for Ethical Communication:** “We endorse freedom of expression, diversity of perspective, and acknowledgement of dissent...” (one of nine unnumbered principles)
- **SPJ Code of Ethics:** Minimize Harm

Heat map

- **Opener (page 379):** Low
- **Key terms (pages 380 and 381):** Low
- **Look at the evidence (page 386):** Low
- **Look at the evidence (page 387):** Low
- **Key idea (pages 388 and 389):** Low
- **Sort the evidence (page 390):** Medium
- **Practice (page 391):** Medium
- **Your task (pages 392 and 393):** Low
- **Your draft (page 394):** Low
- **Check your work (pages 395 and 396):** Low

Try it at your school

Find your next local agenda.

- With a trusted adult, find the website for your city council, school board or parks board
- Open the next meeting agenda and find one item that affects you
- Read the public-comment instructions: sign-up, time limit, written option
- Draft a practice comment and decide with your adult whether to submit it

Who to ask: Clerk of the council or school board, a civics teacher, a student representative to the board if your district has one

Try it at your school, continued

Safety: Public comments and names may be published. Leave out addresses, phone numbers and anyone else’s private story. Attend meetings with a trusted adult.

Sources

- Peacock, “Parks and Recreation,” No date listed
- Seattle City Council, “Public Comment,” No date listed

Case 19: What should Gia say in her two-minute comment?

Gia has two minutes to speak to the parks committee about the court lights, but her draft is three pages long.

On your own Read What happened and underline the sentence that says what item 4 proposes. About 4 minutes.



Gia and Mateo sit on a front stoop, each holding pages of notes.

Your role: You're the one holding the timer and listening for the request. **New skill:** Fit a request to the body's remit and time limit.

What happened

It is Tuesday, 5:40 p.m. The parks committee meets at 6. Item 4 on its agenda is a proposal to turn off the park's court lights at 8 p.m. The reason given is complaints about evening noise from nearby residents.

Gia, 21, wants to speak against item 4. It is her first time speaking at a public meeting. Each speaker gets two minutes. On Monday night, Gia wrote a three-page draft. When she reads page one out loud, it takes two minutes and forty seconds.

Mateo, 22, is timing her from a bench. He follows every word, but he cannot tell what she wants the committee to do. The draft also mentions a friend's private situation, and page two is about the bus. Everything Gia says will become part of the public record, along with her name.

Your question: What should Gia keep in her two-minute comment, and what should she cut?

⌚ Pacing

Full chapter: 4 min.

✂ Short on time: 3 min. Read What happened aloud and go straight to the key terms.

💬 Say this

"You get two minutes at a public meeting. What would you say first?" — Collect two or three answers. Do not correct anyone yet.

👁 Watch for

Misconception: Students think the park is closing. **Listen for:** "They're shutting down the park." **Then:** Ask what item 4 says exactly. It turns off the court lights at 8 p.m.

📖 Support

- Read What happened aloud while students follow along.

🔥 Heat check

■□□ Low.

Key terms

On your own Read each key term and its example, then write your first guess in the box. About 4 minutes.

Agenda item An agenda item is one topic listed on a meeting's official schedule of business.

En español: punto del orden del día

In this case: Item 4, "Evening court hours," proposes turning off the court lights at 8:00 p.m. Its action is a committee recommendation to the full council.

Remit A remit is the set of matters that a committee or other body is responsible for and can act on.

En español: competencia

In this case: The parks committee can recommend court hours. It cannot change bus routes, so page two of Gia's draft belongs with a different body.

Public record A public record is information a government keeps that anyone can ask to see, such as meeting comments.

En español: registro público

In this case: Comments and speakers' names become part of the public record. That is why Gia leaves her friend's private situation out of her comment.

Who is involved



Gia

Speaking at a public meeting for the first time

"I timed page one out loud. Two minutes forty. There are three pages."



Mateo

Timing Gia's practice run from a bench

"I followed all of it. I still couldn't tell you what she wants them to do."

⌚ Pacing

Full chapter: 4 min.

✂ Short on time: 2 min. Read the key terms aloud. Skip Who is involved.

💬 Say this

"Which part of item 4 tells you what the committee can do?" — Point to the action line: a recommendation to the full council.

👁 Watch for

Misconception: Students think the committee makes the final decision. **Listen for:** "The committee decides tonight." **Then:** Reread the action line. The committee recommends, and the full council decides.

📖 Support

- Pair students who share a language to explain each term with an example from the case.
- **Cognates:** agenda (agenda), committee (comité), public (público), comment (comentario), recommendation (recomendación), residents (residentes), private (privado), observation (observación).

🌡 Heat check

■□□ Low.

🔑 Answer key

Any first guess is fine. Students return to it on the My take page.

Your first guess

Before you look at the evidence, what do you think Gia should say in her two minutes?

My first guess is ___, because ___.

➡ My first guess is that she should cut page two, because the bus is not on this agenda.

Notes

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is no text or other markings on the paper.

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Reading passage

Public comment as civic craft

On your own Read the passage. At each Stop and think box, pause and answer the question in your head or with a partner. About 6 minutes.

Words to know

- **Agenda item:** An agenda item is one topic listed on a meeting's official schedule of business.
- **Remit:** A remit is the set of matters that a committee or other body is responsible for and can act on.
- **Public record:** A public record is information a government keeps that anyone can ask to see, such as meeting comments.
- **Proposal:** A proposal is a change that someone suggests and that has not been approved yet.
- **Decision-maker:** A decision-maker is the person or group with the power to make a particular choice.

The story: A comment built for its audience

Gia, 21, plans to speak against a parks committee proposal. Item 4 would turn off the park's court lights and close the lighted courts at 8 p.m., citing residents' complaints about evening noise. The agenda frames the action as a committee recommendation to the full council. Speakers sign up by 5 p.m., get two minutes each and become part of the public record by name. Written comments are accepted in advance.

Gia's draft reflects a common first-time pattern. It is three pages long, with page one alone at two minutes and forty seconds. It centers on a request no one can grant, "Please don't close the park," when the item concerns lights and hours. It spends a page on the bus, a real issue outside the committee's authority. It includes a friend's private circumstances. It also addresses the committee as "you guys" who "never listen to young people."

Mateo, 22, times a practice run from a bench and listens as a committee member would. His diagnosis is that the comment contains no request he could repeat back. His intervention is a question rather than an edit: if the committee remembers one sentence, what is it? The answer becomes the opening line.

Your role is to hold the timer and listen for the request.

⌚ Pacing

Reading: about 6 min (770 words). Short on time: read it aloud together, pausing at each Stop and think.

❓ Stop and think

1. **After "The story: A comment built for its audience":** Why might an unrepresentative pool of commenters make Gia's comment more valuable, not less?
2. **After "Remit, sequence and the public record":** How does the committee's role as a recommending body change Gia's strategy?
3. **After "Participation, representation and professional ethics":** Where is the line between sharing lived experience and exposing someone else's private life?

❓ **Stop and think.** Why might an unrepresentative pool of commenters make Gia's comment more valuable, not less?

Remit, sequence and the public record

An **agenda item** is one topic listed on a meeting's official schedule of business. A **remit** is the set of matters that a committee or other body is responsible for and can act on. Effective participation depends on matching the request to both. Item 4 is about lighting and hours, and the committee's remit extends to recommending court hours. The bus is out of scope, so under Case 10's principle of routing problems to the responsible office, it goes elsewhere.

The case assembles earlier skills into a single practical sequence. Case 4 introduced the **proposal**, a change that someone suggests and that has not been approved yet, and the **decision-maker**, the person or group with the power to make a particular choice. The agenda reveals a two-step structure. The committee recommends, and the council decides. That tells Gia both what to ask for and that later chances to speak may exist.

Her revised comment follows a four-part structure that works in many settings. It identifies the item, reports an observation, explains its significance and makes a single actionable request. She counted twenty or thirty people on the courts between 8 and 9, many of whom work late, and she asks for lights until 9 on weekdays this summer. The request also engages the opposing written comment, from a resident who likes the courts but hears late noise at home and has children with school in the morning. A 9 p.m. compromise gives the committee a way to act on both concerns.

The last revision concerns privacy. A **public record** is information a government keeps that anyone can ask to see, such as meeting comments. Speaking publicly means accepting that one's own words become part of that record. It does not license publishing someone else's private situation.

❓ **Stop and think.** How does the committee's role as a recommending body change Gia's strategy?

Participation, representation and professional ethics

Public comment procedures are local. Seattle City Council, for example, accepts spoken comment in person or by phone and written comment by email, with up to two minutes per speaker (Seattle City Council, no date listed). The U.S. Department of Labor advises federal rulemaking commenters that comments become public and work best with specific experience and data (U.S. Department of Labor, no date listed).

Political scientists have studied who participates. Einstein, Palmer and Glick found from meeting minutes that local commenters are often unrepresentative of the broader community (Perspectives on Politics, October 14, 2018).

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Participation, representation and professional ethics, continued

Sahn examined whether and how public comment connects to policy outcomes (American Journal of Political Science, August 31, 2024). Together, these studies suggest both the limits of comment and the value of new voices. Student groups in Newark and Philadelphia have brought their own research and district data to school boards (Chalkbeat Newark, November 26, 2025; Chalkbeat Philadelphia, April 3, 2026).

The pop-culture version is instructive by contrast. In the first episode of Parks and Recreation (NBC, April 9, 2009), Ann Perkins complains at a public forum about a construction pit, and Leslie Knope promises on the spot to build a park. In our reading, real meetings run on agendas, time limits and bodies that can decide only some things.

Professional codes describe both sides of the exchange. ASPA asks public servants to “inform the public and encourage active engagement in governance” (ASPA Code of Ethics, 2013). The NCA credo endorses “freedom of expression, diversity of perspective, and acknowledgement of dissent” (NCA Credo for Ethical Communication, 2024).

 **Stop and think.** Where is the line between sharing lived experience and exposing someone else's private life?

Sources

Real source | Seattle City Council | No date listed

Public Comment

Real source | U.S. Department of Labor, Wage and Hour Division | No date listed

How to Comment on a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM)

Real source | Perspectives on Politics (Einstein, Palmer & Glick) | October 14, 2018

Who Participates in Local Government? Evidence from Meeting Minutes

Real source | American Journal of Political Science (Sahn) | August 31, 2024

Public comment and public policy

Real source | Chalkbeat Newark | November 26, 2025

How a Newark student coalition is using its own research to press for change in schools

Real source | Chalkbeat Philadelphia | April 3, 2026

‘Not what democracy is all about’: Philly students slam school leaders’ approach to school closures

Real source | Peacock | 2009

Parks and Recreation

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Notes

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Look at the evidence

On your own Read each document and write what it shows and what it leaves out. About 7 minutes.

Evidence A | Meeting agenda

Item 4 on the parks committee agenda

Item 4. Evening court hours. Proposal to turn off the court lights and close the lighted courts at 8:00 p.m. Background: complaints about evening noise from nearby residents. Action: committee recommendation to the full council.

Look closely: Circle the item number, the proposed time and the action.

What it shows

➤ One item, one proposal and one action: a recommendation to the full council.

What it leaves out

➤ How many residents complained, and whether the committee weighed other closing times.

Evidence B | Comment rules

How to comment at the meeting

Sign up to speak by 5:00 p.m. on the day of the meeting. Each speaker has 2 minutes. Written comments may be submitted before the meeting. Comments and speakers' names become part of the public record.

Look closely: Underline the deadline, the time limit and what becomes public.

What it shows

➤ Two ways in, speaking for 2 minutes or writing ahead, and both go on the record.

What it leaves out

➤ How much weight the full council gives the committee's recommendation.

Case 19 | Look at the evidence | College educator edition

⌚ Pacing

Full chapter: 7 min.

✂ Short on time: 6 min. Participants fill in only the What it shows boxes.

💬 Say this

“Find three facts in the comment rules: the deadline, the time limit and what becomes public.” — List them on the board: 5:00 p.m., 2 minutes, comments and names.

👁 Watch for

Misconception: Students skip the public-record line. **Listen for:** “It’s just a meeting, nobody reads that.” **Then:** Reread the last sentence of Evidence B. Names and comments stay on the record.

📖 Support

- Give each document on its own half-page with the key line enlarged.
- Read Gia’s draft and the resident’s comment aloud.
- **Cognates:** agenda (agenda), committee (comité), public (público), comment (comentario), recommendation (recomendación), residents (residentes), private (privado), observation (observación).

🔗 Stretch

- Ask which document shows who decides and which shows how to speak, and what neither one says about the complaints.

🔥 Heat check

■□□ Low.

Look at the evidence, continued

Evidence C | Draft

Gia's three-page draft (excerpt)

"The park is really important to everyone and closing it is a terrible idea. I go there all the time with my friends... You guys never listen to young people. Please don't close the park."

Look closely: Find the request. Does it match what item 4 proposes?

What it shows

➤ A sincere draft whose request answers a proposal that is not on the agenda.

What it leaves out

➤ Item 4's real proposal, the 8 p.m. time and any specific observation.

Evidence D | Written comment

A comment from a nearby resident

The courts are good for the neighborhood, but the noise late in the evening carries into our apartment. We have kids with school in the morning.

Look closely: What does this resident like, and what is the problem?

What it shows

➤ An opposing interest stated fairly: the courts help, but late noise reaches home.

What it leaves out

➤ When the noise becomes a problem, so nobody knows whether 9 p.m. would work.

What is still missing from the evidence?

➤ How many residents complained, and when. Whether compromise hours were weighed, how the full council usually treats the committee's recommendations, and what absent court users think.

Case 19 | Look at the evidence | College educator edition

⌚ Pacing

Full chapter: 6 min.

✂ Short on time: 5 min. Participants fill in only the What it leaves out boxes.

💬 Say this

"Find three facts in the comment rules: the deadline, the time limit and what becomes public." — List them on the board: 5:00 p.m., 2 minutes, comments and names.

👁 Watch for

Misconception: Students skip the public-record line. **Listen for:** "It's just a meeting, nobody reads that." **Then:** Reread the last sentence of Evidence B. Names and comments stay on the record.

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- Give each document on its own half-page with the key line enlarged.
- Read Gia's draft and the resident's comment aloud.
- **Cognates:** agenda (agenda), committee (comité), public (público), comment (comentario), recommendation (recomendación), residents (residentes), private (privado), observation (observación).

🔗 Stretch

- Ask which document shows who decides and which shows how to speak, and what neither one says about the complaints.

🔥 Heat check

■□□ Low.

Key idea: remit

On your own Read the key idea and the code of ethics, then answer the question in the box. About 10 minutes.

A **remit** is the set of matters that a committee or other body is responsible for and can act on. The parks committee can make a recommendation about court hours. It cannot change bus routes. That is why Gia's comment should ask for something the parks committee can do.

An **agenda item** is one topic listed on a meeting's official schedule of business. Each committee, council or board sets its own rules for who can speak, when and for how long. Seattle City Council is one real example. Its public comment page describes speaking in person or by phone and signing up before the meeting. Each speaker gets up to two minutes, and written comments can be sent by email.

A short comment can do four jobs. It names the agenda item, shares something the speaker observed, says why it matters and ends with a clear request. Before adding personal details, check whether comments become public. A **public record** is information a government keeps that anyone can ask to see, such as meeting comments. At Gia's meeting, comments and speakers' names become part of the public record.

Professional standards

Real source | American Society for Public Administration (ASPA)

ASPA Code of Ethics: 3. Promote democratic participation

"Inform the public and encourage active engagement in governance. Be open, transparent and responsive, and respect and assist all persons in their dealings with public organizations."

In plain words: ASPA's code asks people in public service to make it easy for every affected person to take part in decisions.

Question: The instructions allow written comments in advance. How does that help court users who cannot come at 6 p.m.?

Your answer

The written route _____. It still _____.

➡ The written route opens the process to people who work during the meeting. It still reaches only those who learn about item 4 in time.

Case 19 | Key idea | College educator edition

⌚ Pacing

Full chapter: 10 min.

✂ Short on time: 6 min. Skip In the news.

💬 Say this

"A remit is what a body can act on. Can the parks committee change bus routes?" — No. It can recommend court hours.

"The ASPA code asks public servants to help people join in. How do written comments help?" — Wait for court users who work late.

👁 Watch for

Misconception: Students treat the ASPA code as a law.

Listen for: "The committee is breaking the law if it ignores her." **Then:** Say: "ASPA's code is a standard for public servants who belong to ASPA. It is not a law."

📖 Support

- Read the code aloud. Point out the label: it is a quotation from a real code.

🔗 Stretch

- Use the NCA row: how could Gia acknowledge the resident's noise concern in one sentence?

🔥 Heat check

■□□ Low.

'Not what democracy is all about': Philly students slam school leaders' approach to school closures



How a Newark student coalition is using its own research to press for change in schools

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.

This page continues page 388. The notes for both pages are on the sheet for page 388.

Sort the evidence

On your own Follow a comment from the speaker to the final decision and fill in each box. About 6 minutes.

Follow a comment from the speaker to the final decision. Which body hears it, which body decides, and whose concerns reach the room?

Turn off the court lights at 8 p.m.?

Who decides

Full council: takes the final action

Under which rule

Who lives with it

Your way in

Whose perspective is missing?

Whose view is missing from these documents? What would you ask them?

The view that is missing is _____. I would ask _____.

➡ The full council's view is missing. I would ask how it usually treats the committee's recommendations on park hours.

Pacing

Full chapter: 6 min.

✂ Short on time: skip this page.

Say this

“Follow Gia’s comment from the meeting to the final decision. Who hears it, and who decides?” — Model the first box together: the parks committee.

Watch for

Misconception: Students leave out the full council. **Listen for:** “If the committee says no, it’s over.” **Then:** Point to the action line in Evidence A. The full council decides.

Support

- Let students write the name of each body before writing sentences.

Heat check

■ ■ □ **Medium.** The missing-perspective question can turn to students’ own work hours or their neighbors.

Cool-down: Keep answers about the court users and residents in the case. No one shares a personal schedule.

Practice: choose a response

On your own Choose the best opening sentence, explain why and fix the two marked phrases. About 5 minutes.

Gia has two minutes on item 4. Which opening sentence gives the committee the most to work with?

- ☐ A “The park is really important to everyone, and closing it is a terrible idea.”
- ☒ B “Good evening. I’m Gia, and I’m commenting on item 4, the proposal to turn off the court lights at 8 p.m.”
- ☐ C “You guys never listen to young people, so I hope tonight is different.”

Why I chose it

➤ B. In a two-minute slot, the first sentence should tell the committee which decision the comment is about. A and C spend that time elsewhere.

Improve a draft

A student’s first draft

Hi, my name is Gia and I have lived in this neighborhood my whole life. The park is really important to everyone and closing it is a terrible idea. I go there all the time with my friends and it’s one of the only free things to do around here. My friend works late and this is the only time she can play and **1** she’s been going through a lot at home. You guys never listen to young people. **2** Please don’t close the park.

Rewrite each marked phrase so it says only what the evidence supports.

Rewrite phrase 1

➤ Many of us work until evening, so the hour after 8 is our time to play.

Rewrite phrase 2

➤ Please recommend keeping the court lights on until 9 p.m. on weekdays this summer.

⌚ Pacing

Full chapter: 5 min.

✂ Short on time: 4 min. Vote on the three openings and skip the marked draft.

💬 Say this

“Gia has two minutes. Which opening gives the committee the most to work with?” — Vote before any discussion.

👁 Watch for

Misconception: Students choose C because it feels honest. **Listen for:** “But it’s true, they never listen.” **Then:** Ask what the committee could do with that sentence.

🔥 Heat check

■ ■ □ **Medium.** Students may voice frustration about adults ignoring young people.

Cool-down: Acknowledge the feeling. Then ask which sentence gives the committee a request.

➤ Answer key

A revised version: Good evening. I’m Gia Brooks-Romano, and I live two blocks from the park. I’m commenting on item 4, the proposal to turn off the court lights at 8 p.m. I play there after café shifts, and on weekday evenings I’ve counted twenty to thirty people using the courts between 8 and 9. Many of us work until evening. I understand the concern about noise from nearby residents. I’m asking the committee to keep the lights on until 9 p.m. on weekdays through the summer and to review noise complaints before making a permanent change. Thank you.

College

Your task

On your own Read the steps and fill in the planner boxes before you start your draft. About 12 minutes.

Prepare the crew's input on item 4 as a small community group. Write a two-minute spoken comment for the parks committee and a follow-up email to the full council, which receives the committee's recommendation.

Use: Case documents: the parks committee agenda, the comment instructions, Gia's three-page draft, the nearby resident's comment and Mateo's question. Real sources: the Seattle City Council public-comment page and research on who speaks at local meetings (Einstein, Palmer and Glick, 2018).

You'll make: Spoken comment, 2 minutes (about 260 words), plus a follow-up email of 120–180 words

Time: 75 minutes

- 1 Reread Evidence A and B. Note the item, the time limit and who decides after the committee.
- 2 Reread the resident's comment in Evidence D. Plan one request that answers it.
- 3 Outline the comment: item, who you are, what you saw, why it matters and the request.
- 4 Write a spoken comment of two minutes or less on the Your draft page.
- 5 Read it aloud with a partner and a timer. Cut until it fits.
- 6 Start the follow-up email on the Your draft page. Finish it, 120 to 180 words, on lined paper.
- 7 Check both texts against the public-record checklist.



Prefer typing? Scan to open the online workspace.

Who hears it, and who decides

🔊 The parks committee hears the comment and recommends. The full council decides.

Case 19 | Your task | College educator edition

⌚ Pacing

Full chapter: 12 min.

✂ Short on time: 12 min.

💬 Say this

“Your group has two audiences: the committee tonight and the council later. What does each body need?” — The committee needs a request it can recommend. The council needs a short record.

👁 Watch for

Misconception: Participants write one text for both audiences. **Listen for:** “We’ll just send the council our speech.” **Then:** Ask what the council needs that the committee already heard.

📄 Support

- Comment outline: item, who you are, what you saw, why it matters, the request
- Timer and a read-aloud rehearsal with a partner
- Public-record checklist from the comment instructions

🔗 Stretch

- Answer the resident's concern about late noise with a specific request the committee could recommend. One example is Gia's request to keep the courts lit until 9 on weekdays through the summer.

🔥 Heat check

■□□ Low.

Your task, continued

Comment outline

Item 4. A small group of court users. Twenty to thirty people between 8 and 9 on weekdays. Many work late. Lights until 9 on weekdays this summer.

How the request answers the resident

• The lights go off at 9, and the committee reviews when the noise happens.

Notes

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue lines, resembling notebook paper. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.

This page continues page 392.

Standards

AAC&U VALUE rubric: Civic Engagement VALUE Rubric; Oral Communication VALUE Rubric; Written Communication VALUE Rubric.

ACRL Framework: Scholarship as Conversation.

The Case plan sheet gives each code in plain words.

Answer key

A strong response:

- Names item 4 and the parks committee, and says the committee makes a recommendation to the full council
- Fits the 2-minute limit when read aloud
- Responds to the resident's noise concern with a specific request
- Sends the follow-up email to the full council, the body that decides after the committee
- Leaves out addresses, phone numbers and anyone else's private story

Your draft

On your own Write your draft in the boxes, using your planner from the page before. About 25 minutes.

Spoken comment, two minutes or less

🗨️ Good evening, members of the parks committee. I'm Gia, and I'm speaking for a small group of friends who use the park. We are commenting on item 4, the proposal to turn off the court lights and close the lighted courts at 8:00 p.m. On weekday evenings, I have counted twenty to thirty people on the courts between 8 and 9. Many of us work until evening, so that hour is when we can play. We also read the written comment from a nearby resident. The courts are good for the neighborhood, the resident wrote, but late noise carries into an apartment where kids have school in the morning. That is a fair concern. We ask the committee to recommend keeping the lights on until 9 p.m. on weekdays through the summer. We also ask the committee to review when the noise happens before it recommends any permanent change. Thank you.

Follow-up email to the full council: first paragraph

🗨️ Dear council members, I spoke at the parks committee meeting on Tuesday about item 4. It proposes turning off the court lights at 8 p.m. The committee's recommendation now comes to you for final action. We asked for lights until 9 p.m. on weekdays through the summer and a review of when the noise happens.

⌚ Pacing

Full chapter: 25 min.

✂️ Short on time: 25 min.

💬 Say this

“Read the comment aloud with a timer. Where does it pass two minutes?” — Partners mark the spot and cut before it.

👁 Watch for

Misconception: The group speaks for people who did not ask it to. **Listen for:** “Everyone in the neighborhood wants this.” **Then:** Ask who asked the group to speak. Name only the people you know about.

🔥 Heat check

■□□ Low.

🗨 Answer key

What to notice in the sample:

1. Names the item in the first lines.
2. Acknowledges the resident before making the request.
3. Answers the noise concern with a specific request.
4. Sends the follow-up to the body that decides after the committee.

Check your work

On your own Answer the Check your work questions, mark your level in each rubric row and write one change you made. About 8 minutes.

- Does your comment name item 4 and fit in two minutes when read aloud? ☒ Yes ☐ No
- Does your request respond to the resident's noise concern? ☒ Yes ☐ No
- Is your email addressed to the full council, the body that decides? ☒ Yes ☐ No
- Did you leave out addresses, phone numbers and anyone else's private story? ☒ Yes ☐ No

How your work is scored

Mark one box in each row.

Skill	Beginning	Developing	Proficient	Advanced
Evidence	☐ No facts.	☐ General claim about importance.	☐ One specific observation tied to the item.	☐ Observation plus acknowledgment of another perspective.
Reasoning	☐ Attacks the body.	☐ States a feeling only.	☐ Explains why the change matters.	☐ Weighs the concern and offers a middle path.
Audience & purpose	☐ Wrong body or no request.	☐ Request is vague.	☐ Names the item and a specific request.	☐ Request fits the body's remit and includes a follow-up.
Revision	☐ No change.	☐ Shortens only.	☐ Removes private details and adds a request.	☐ Explains each cut in terms of time, privacy and purpose.

Pacing

Full chapter: 8 min.

 Short on time: 5 min. Participants answer the Check your work questions only.

Say this

“Mark your level honestly. Then make one change and say why.” — Ask for one removed private detail or one sharper request.

Watch for

Misconception: Students only shorten the draft.

Listen for: “I just cut some words.” **Then:** Point to the Revision row. Ask why each cut helps the committee or protects someone.

Heat check

 Low.

Answer key

How to assess: Score with the case rubric. Add checks for the time limit, the correct body at each stage and careful handling of personal information.

Proficient looks like:

- **Evidence:** One specific observation tied to the item.
- **Reasoning:** Explains why the change matters.
- **Audience & purpose:** Names the item and a specific request.
- **Revision:** Removes private details and adds a request.

Check your work, continued

One change I made after the timed reading

I changed ___ because ___.

Q. I cut the sentence about the bus, because the parks committee cannot act on it and the comment ran over two minutes.

Notes

[illegible]

This page continues page 395. The notes for both pages are on the sheet for page 395.

Questions to discuss

On your own Write a short answer to each question, then complete the sentence frames. About 10 minutes.

- 1 The parks committee cannot fix the bus problem. Who should get that question instead?

➤ The body with bus routes in its remit. Sending the question there saves both meetings' time and gives it a chance of action.

- 2 How could Gia's comment respond to the resident's concern about noise?

➤ By stating the concern fairly first. An end time of 9 p.m. and a review of the complaints give both sides part of what they need.

- 3 What does Gia get from speaking, even if the committee recommends turning off the lights?

➤ The committee hears about a use it might not know. Her count stays on the record, and she can still write to the full council.

- 4 Court users who work late may miss a 6 p.m. meeting. How could their views reach the committee?

➤ Through written comments sent ahead. Einstein, Palmer and Glick found commenters often do not reflect the whole community, so the committee should not assume they do.

My take

My claim: ____.

➤ The group should speak on item 4 tonight and write to the full council, because the decision happens in two stages.

⌚ Pacing

Full chapter: 10 min.

✂ Short on time: 7 min. Use question 3 as a closing question.

💬 Say this

"Answer with a detail from a document, not a guess about the committee." — Ask for one answer per question.

🔗 Stretch

- Compare Evidence B with Seattle City Council's public comment page. Which rules match, and which would you check locally?
- Going further: Write Gia's request as one sentence a listener could repeat. Then reread your comment. Does it speak for anyone who has not asked you to?
- Going further: Compare the comment rules in Evidence B with Seattle City Council's public comment page. Which rules match? Which would you need to check for your own city or school board?
- Going further: Record your comment as audio, then turn it into a written comment. Keep the same point in both. Ask a listener which version made the request clearer.
- Going further: With a trusted adult, find the website for your city council, school board or parks board. Open the next meeting agenda and find one item that affects you. Read the comment rules: the sign-up, the time limit and the written option. Leave addresses, phone numbers and other people's private stories out of anything you submit.
- Compare comment rules for two different local bodies
- Track a real agenda item from discussion to vote

My take, continued

The best evidence is ____, because ____.

👉 The comment rules, because they set the time limit, the written route and the public record.

Someone who disagrees might say ____.

👉 A two-minute comment rarely changes a recommendation, so the group should spend its time elsewhere.

The limit of the evidence is ____.

👉 No document shows how the full council usually treats the committee's recommendations.

I would change my mind if ____.

👉 The committee had already decided before the meeting and did not read written comments.

Notes

This page continues page 397.

Heat check

■ ■ □ **Question 2: Medium.** Students may side with young people or with neighbors and describe either group unfairly.

Cool-down: Reread the resident's comment aloud. Ask what this family needs, in their own words, before anyone answers.

Talk about this case at home

Case 19: What should Gia say in her two-minute comment?

In this case, Gia gets two minutes at a parks committee meeting to speak about a plan to turn off the court lights. Your student helped cut her three-page draft into a short comment with one clear request.

Questions to talk about

- 1 Who makes decisions about parks and other public spaces in a town or city?
- 2 What makes a short request easy for a listener to remember?
- 3 Why might someone leave a friend's story out of a public comment?

Nobody needs to share personal stories or private information to talk about this case.



See the case online.

Case 19 | Talk about this case at home | College educator edition

⌚ Pacing

At home: this page takes no class time.

💬 Say this

“Read this page at home with someone you trust.” —
Nobody needs to share a personal story to complete it.