

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 a formal document for its action and its rules
- explain which body has the power to decide a question
- write for a public audience with a clear request

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- find a real agenda item and its body, action and comment rules
- judge whether the body can act on a request, and name the right body if it cannot
- write a comment of 200 to 250 words that could be submitted
- handle personal information with the public record in mind

Materials

- This chapter, one copy per student
- A local meeting agenda each student finds with a trusted adult
- An agenda-reading guide and a public-record checklist

The task in this edition

Task: Find a real upcoming local meeting agenda with an adult, choose an item and write a comment you could submit (submitting is optional).

Students make: Written comment (200—250 words) plus a 100-word process note

Pacing

Opener (page 370): 4 min. Short on time: 3 min. Read the summary line aloud and go straight to the evidence.

Key terms (pages 371 and 372): 4 min. Short on time: skip.

Look at the evidence (page 376): 6 min. Short on time: 5 min. Students fill in only the What it leaves out boxes.

Look at the evidence (page 377): 5 min. Short on time: 3 min. Read Evidence C and D aloud; skip their boxes.

Key idea (pages 378 and 379): 8 min. Short on time: 5 min. Read the remit paragraph only. Skip In the news.

Pacing, continued

Sort the evidence (page 380): 6 min. Short on time: skip.

Practice (page 381): 5 min. Short on time: skip.

Your task (pages 382 and 383): 15 min. Short on time: 15 min.

Your draft (pages 384 and 385): 20 min. Short on time: 20 min.

Check your work (pages 386 and 387): 6 min. Short on time: 5 min. Students answer the Check your work questions only.

Questions to discuss (pages 388 and 389): 8 min. Short on time: 4 min. Use question 1 as an exit ticket.

Talk about this case at home (page 390): at home.

Periods: full chapter 87 minutes; one period 60 minutes.

Standards

RI.11-12.1 Back up an analysis with the strongest evidence from the text, including where the text leaves things uncertain.

W.11-12.1 Write arguments that analyze substantial topics or texts, using valid reasoning and enough relevant evidence.

W.11-12.5 Strengthen writing by planning, revising, editing or rewriting, focusing on what matters most for the purpose and audience.

Case 19 plan, continued

Standards, continued

SL.11-12.1.c Keep a discussion moving with questions that probe reasoning and evidence, and make sure the full range of views is heard.

SL.11-12.1.d Respond to different views, pull together what each side says, resolve conflicts where possible and name what still needs research.

D2.Civ.9.9-12 Use fitting deliberative processes in different settings. In this case: Students use appropriate deliberative processes in a public meeting.

D2.Civ.1.9-12 Tell apart the powers and responsibilities of local, state, tribal, national and international institutions. In this case: Students distinguish the powers of a council committee from those of other bodies.

D4.8.9-12 Use deliberative and democratic strategies and procedures to make decisions and act at school and in the community. In this case: Students apply democratic procedures by preparing a comment for a real process.

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)

Codes of ethics, continued

- **SPJ Code of Ethics:** Minimize Harm

Heat map

- **Opener (page 370):** Low
- **Key terms (pages 371 and 372):** Low
- **Look at the evidence (page 376):** Low
- **Look at the evidence (page 377):** Low
- **Key idea (pages 378 and 379):** Low
- **Sort the evidence (page 380):** Medium
- **Practice (page 381):** Medium
- **Your task (pages 382 and 383):** Medium
- **Your draft (pages 384 and 385):** Low
- **Check your work (pages 386 and 387):** 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

Try it at your school, continued

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

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.

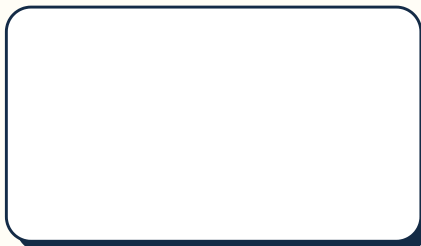
Sources

- 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 the summary line aloud and go straight to the evidence.

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: skip this page.

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 open with the bus problem, because it affects the most people.

Notes

[illegible]

This page continues page 371. The notes for both pages are on the sheet for page 371.

Reading passage

Two minutes, one ask

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 5 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: The first time at the microphone

Gia, 21, has spent her life in Fort Greene, and the park is part of her week. On Tuesday, the parks committee meets at 6 p.m. Item 4 on its agenda proposes turning off the court lights and closing the lighted courts at 8 p.m., citing complaints about evening noise from nearby residents. The agenda lists the action as a committee recommendation to the full council. Gia wants to speak against it. She has never spoken at a public meeting before.

The rules give her two minutes. Speakers sign up by 5 p.m., written comments may be submitted in advance and comments and names become part of the public record. At 5:40, Gia reads her draft aloud on a bench while Mateo, 22, times her. The draft runs three pages, and page one alone takes two minutes and forty seconds. It also contains a friend's private situation and a page about the bus.

Mateo's feedback is precise without being a rewrite. He followed every word and still cannot say what she wants the committee to do. His question is the most useful editing tool in the case. If the committee remembers one sentence, what is it? That sentence goes first.

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

? Stop and think. Why does Mateo's one-sentence question work better than line edits?

Pacing

Reading: about 5 min (706 words). Short on time: read it aloud together, pausing at each Stop and think.

Stop and think

1. **After “The story: The first time at the microphone”:** Why does Mateo's one-sentence question work better than line edits?
2. **After “Matching a request to a body”:** How does asking for 9 p.m. instead of no change affect the committee's choices?
3. **After “Research and real practice”:** The research shows commenters often do not reflect the whole community. What does that suggest about who should speak?

Matching a request to a body

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. The two concepts define what Gia can usefully ask. Item 4 concerns lighting and closing time. The committee's remit includes recommending court hours. It does not include buses. Her draft's central plea, "Please don't close the park," misstates the item, since no one has proposed closing the park.

The new skill is fitting a request to the body's remit and time limit, and it assembles earlier skills. 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. Here the chain has two links. The committee recommends, and the full council decides. Case 10 taught you to route a problem to the office responsible, which is why the bus page belongs with a transit office rather than this committee.

A strong two-minute comment does four jobs. It names the agenda item, reports an observation, explains why it matters and makes one request. Gia's revised comment does exactly that. It names item 4. It reports that she counted twenty or thirty people on the courts between 8 and 9. It notes that many of them work late. And it asks for lights until 9 on weekdays this summer. The request also engages the resident who wrote that late noise carries into their apartment and that their kids have school in the morning. Asking for 9 rather than no change gives the committee a middle path that answers both concerns in part.

The final cut is ethical. A **public record** is information a government keeps that anyone can ask to see, such as meeting comments. Everything Gia says will be attached to her name and kept. Her friend's situation belongs to her friend, so it comes out.

? **Stop and think.** How does asking for 9 p.m. instead of no change affect the committee's choices?

Research and real practice

Rules differ by body. Seattle City Council 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). That is one city's process, not a rule for every council. Research raises a harder question about who shows up. A study of meeting minutes found that local commenters often do not reflect the whole community (Einstein, Palmer and Glick, Perspectives on Politics, October 14, 2018). Other peer-reviewed work examines whether and how public comment connects to policy outcomes (Sahn, American Journal of Political Science, August 31, 2024).

Young people are using the process well. Philadelphia students testified at board meetings about school closures, drawing on district data (Chalkbeat Philadelphia, April 3, 2026).

This page continues page 373. The notes for both pages are on the sheet for page 373.

Research and real practice, continued

Journalists hold a related privacy standard. The SPJ code says “private people have a greater right to control information about themselves than public figures” (SPJ Code of Ethics, September 6, 2014). Gia applies that principle to her friend.

? **Stop and think.** The research shows commenters often do not reflect the whole community. What does that suggest about who should speak?

Sources

Real source | Seattle City Council | No date listed

Public Comment

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 Philadelphia | April 3, 2026

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

Real source | Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ) | 2014

SPJ Code of Ethics**Notes**

This page continues page 373. The notes for both pages are on the sheet for page 373.

Look at the evidence

On your own Read each document and write what it shows and what it leaves out. About 6 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

➤ A proposal about lights and hours only. The committee recommends; the council decides.

What it leaves out

➤ How many complaints there were, when the noise happens and any other hours considered.

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

➤ A deadline, a time limit, a written route and a public record for every comment.

What it leaves out

➤ How the full council usually treats committee recommendations.

Case 19 | Look at the evidence | Grades 11–12 educator edition

🕒 Pacing

Full chapter: 6 min.

✂ Short on time: 5 min. Students 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.

📄 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

➤ Strong feeling and a request, "Please don't close the park," that misstates item 4.

What it leaves out

➤ The item, the lights and the 8 p.m. time, and any observation the committee can use.

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

➤ A family that values the courts but hears late-evening noise, with kids who have school.

What it leaves out

➤ When the noise starts to bother them, which matters for any middle-ground hours.

What is still missing from the evidence?

➤ The number of complaints and when the noise occurs. Whether compromise hours were considered, how the full council treats committee recommendations, and what absent court users think.

Case 19 | Look at the evidence | Grades 11–12 educator edition

🕒 Pacing

Full chapter: 5 min.

✂ Short on time: 3 min. Read Evidence C and D aloud; skip their 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.

Key idea: remit

On your own Read the key idea and the code of ethics, then answer the question in the box. About 8 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

Written comments ____, but ____.

➞ Written comments open the process to people who work at 6 p.m., but they only help people who know about item 4 before the meeting.

⌚ Pacing

Full chapter: 8 min.

✂ Short on time: 5 min. Read the remit paragraph only.
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.

Real source | Chalkbeat Philadelphia | April 3, 2026

Students testified at board meetings and used district data, real public comment with a clear destination.

Real source | Chalkbeat Newark | November 26, 2025

Teens brought evidence and specific requests to their school board, the formula this case teaches.

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 378. The notes for both pages are on the sheet for page 378.

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 _____.

➡ **Court users who cannot attend a 6 p.m. meeting. I would ask whether they know they can send a written comment before the meeting.**

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. A misstates item 4, which can make listeners doubt the rest. C may feel true but gives the committee nothing to act on.

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

➤ Cut the private detail. Keep the public point: many of us work until evening.

Rewrite phrase 2

➤ I ask the committee to keep the lights on until 9 p.m. on weekdays this summer.

⌚ Pacing

Full chapter: 5 min.

✂ Short on time: skip this page.

💬 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.

Other notes on the draft:

- “I have lived in this neighborhood my whole life” Good: it establishes a stake. Keep it short.

Grades 11–12

Your task

On your own Read the steps and fill in the planner boxes before you start your draft. About 15 minutes.

Find a real upcoming local meeting agenda with an adult, choose an item and write a comment you could submit (submitting is optional).

Use: A real local agenda plus the Seattle page as a model of comment rules.

You'll make: Written comment (200–250 words) plus a 100-word process note

Time: 60 minutes

- 1 Open the website of your city council, school board or parks board with a trusted adult.
- 2 Find the next meeting agenda and choose one item that affects you.
- 3 Fill in the planner: the body, the item, the action and the comment rules.
- 4 Decide whether this body can act on your request. If not, name the body that can.
- 5 Write a comment of 200 to 250 words on the Your draft page.
- 6 Write a process note of about 100 words that names your next step.
- 7 Leave out addresses, phone numbers and anyone else's private story.

Prefer typing? Scan to open the online workspace.

The body, the item and the action

➡ Parks committee, item 4, evening court hours. Action: a recommendation to the full council.

The comment rules

➡ Sign up by 5:00 p.m. Two minutes to speak. Written comments before the meeting. Names are public.

Case 19 | Your task | Grades 11–12 educator edition

⌚ Pacing

Full chapter: 15 min.

✂ Short on time: 15 min.

💬 Say this

“Before you write, answer three questions: which body, which item, and can it act on your request?” — The sample answers use item 4 in Gia's voice. Students name their own body and item.

👁 Watch for

Misconception: Students choose an item outside the body's remit. **Listen for:** “I'll ask the parks committee about the buses.” **Then:** Ask what the agenda's action line says. If the body cannot act, name the body that can.

📄 Support

- Agenda-reading guide
- Comment template
- Public-record checklist
- Agenda-reading guide: item number, description, action, sign-up deadline, time limit, written option.

🔗 Stretch

- Explain whether the body you chose can act on your request, and where to go if it can't.

🔥 Heat check

■ ■ □ **Medium.** Real agendas can include issues that touch students' own families or neighborhoods.

Cool-down: Students may choose any item. No one explains why an item matters to their family.

Your task, continued

Can this body act on my request?

☐ Yes for court hours, which the committee can recommend. No for the bus, which belongs with the body that runs bus routes.

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 382.

Standards

Common Core: RI.11-12.1; W.11-12.1; W.11-12.5; SL.11-12.1.c; SL.11-12.1.d.

C3 Framework: D2.Civ.9-12; D2.Civ.1.9-12; D4.8.9-12.

The Case plan sheet gives each code in plain words.

Answer key

A strong response:

- Correctly identifies body, item and remit
- Comment is specific and supported
- Process note names the next route
- Personal information handled carefully

Your draft

On your own Write your draft in the boxes, using your planner from the page before. About 20 minutes.

Your comment, 200 to 250 words

👉 Good evening, members of the parks committee. My name is Gia. I'm commenting on item 4, the proposal to turn off the court lights and close the lighted courts at 8:00 p.m. I play on those courts after my café shifts. On weekday evenings, I have counted twenty to thirty people using the courts between 8 and 9. Many of us work until evening, so that hour is the only time we can play. I also read the written comment from a nearby family. They like the courts, but late noise carries into their apartment, and their kids have school in the morning. That concern is fair, and I do not want to dismiss it. I'm asking the committee to recommend keeping the lights on until 9 p.m. on weekdays through the summer. I also ask the committee to review when the noise happens before it recommends any permanent change. Thank you for your time.

Process note, about 100 words

👉 The parks committee can recommend court hours, so item 4 is the right place for this request. The committee does not decide the final outcome. Its recommendation goes to the full council, so my next step is a written comment to the council before it acts. My bus request does not belong here, because the parks committee cannot change bus routes. I will find the agenda of the body that runs the buses. I left out

⌚ Pacing

Full chapter: 20 min.

✂ Short on time: 20 min.

💬 Say this

“Read your process note. Could a friend follow it to the next step?” — Ask for the name of the next body.

👁 Watch for

Misconception: The comment includes personal details.

Listen for: “I live at ...” **Then:** Check the draft against the public-record checklist. Remove addresses and other people's stories.

🔥 Heat check

■□□ Low.

👉 Answer key

What to notice in the sample:

1. Names the item first. The sample uses item 4 in Gia's voice; students name their own body and item.
2. Acknowledges another group's concern before the request.
3. Follows the decision past the committee to the next route.
4. Handles personal information on purpose.

Your draft, continued

Process note, about 100 words, continued

✎ my address and my friend's situation, because comments and names become part of the public record.

Notes

This page continues page 384. The notes for both pages are on the sheet for page 384.

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 6 minutes.

- Does your comment name the body, the item and the action? ☒ Yes ☐ No
- Does it make one specific request the body can act on? ☒ Yes ☐ No
- Does your process note name the next body or step? ☒ Yes ☐ No
- Did you leave out addresses, phone numbers and other people's private stories? ☒ 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: 6 min.

 Short on time: 5 min. Students 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: The comment is scored for the correct body, item and remit, a specific supported request, a process note naming the next route 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.

[illegible]

Questions to discuss

On your own Write a short answer to each question, then complete the sentence frames. About 8 minutes.

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

➤ The body with bus routes in its remit. Gia should find its agenda and rules and keep the bus out of her parks comment.

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

➤ She could name the concern in one sentence, then ask for 9 p.m. on weekdays and a review of when the noise happens.

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

➤ Her count goes on the public record, she can follow the item to the full council, and she learns how the process works.

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

➤ Through written comments before the meeting. The committee could make that option easier to find, since commenters often do not reflect the whole community.

My take

My claim: ____.

➤ Gia should name item 4, give one observation, acknowledge the noise concern and make one request.

Case 19 | Questions to discuss | Grades 11–12 educator edition

🕒 Pacing

Full chapter: 8 min.

✂ Short on time: 4 min. Use question 1 as an exit ticket.

💬 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 agenda, because its action line shows the committee recommends and the full council decides.

Someone who disagrees might say ____.

👉 Gia should skip the meeting and write to the full council, which makes the final decision.

The limit of the evidence is ____.

👉 No document says how many residents complained or when the noise happens.

I would change my mind if ____.

👉 The complaints showed that the noise starts before 9 p.m. on weekdays.

Notes

This page continues page 388.

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 | Grades 11–12 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.