

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:

- summarize a short document accurately
- tell a fact from a feeling in a draft
- revise a paragraph for a named audience

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- sort a long draft into what to keep and what to cut
- cut the draft to 90 seconds while keeping the item, one observation, why it matters and one request
- remove private details that would stay on the public record
- explain each cut in a note of about 100 words

Materials

- This chapter, one copy per student

Materials, continued

- Evidence A, B, C and D
- A cutting checklist and a timer for each pair

The task in this edition

Task: Cut Gia’s long draft into a 90-second comment, then write a note explaining what you cut and why.

Students make: 90-second comment plus a 100-word cutting note

Pacing

Opener (page 360): 4 min. Short on time: 3 min. Read the summary line and the first paragraph aloud.

Key terms (pages 361 and 362): 5 min. Short on time: skip. Define remit and public record aloud in one minute.

Look at the evidence (page 366): 6 min. Short on time: 5 min. Students fill in only the What it shows boxes for Evidence A and B.

Look at the evidence (page 367): 6 min. Short on time: 5 min. Read Evidence C and D aloud. Students fill in only the What it leaves out boxes.

Key idea (pages 368 and 369): 7 min. Short on time: skip. Assign the key idea as reading for the next class.

Sort the evidence (page 370): 6 min. Short on time: skip.

Pacing, continued

- Practice (page 371):** 6 min. Short on time: 5 min. Vote on the three openings. Skip the marked draft, because the task covers it.
- Your task (page 372):** 8 min. Short on time: 8 min.
- Your draft (page 373):** 18 min. Short on time: 16 min. Students write the comment in class and finish the cutting note at home.
- Check your work (pages 374 and 375):** 6 min. Short on time: 4 min. Students answer the Check your work questions only.
- Questions to discuss (pages 376 and 377):** 8 min. Short on time: 4 min. Use question 4 as an exit ticket.
- Talk about this case at home (page 378):** at home.
- Periods:** full chapter 80 minutes; one period 50 minutes.
- Standards**
- RI.9-10.1** Support an analysis with solid, complete evidence from the text, both for what it states and for what it implies.
- W.9-10.1** Write arguments that analyze substantial topics or texts, using valid reasoning and enough relevant evidence.
- W.9-10.5** 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.9-10.1.c Move a discussion forward with questions that connect it to larger ideas, bring others in and test ideas and conclusions.

SL.9-10.1.d Respond to different views, sum up where people agree and disagree, and adjust your view when the evidence calls for it.

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

Heat map

- **Opener (page 360):** Low
- **Key terms (pages 361 and 362):** Low
- **Look at the evidence (page 366):** Low
- **Look at the evidence (page 367):** Low
- **Key idea (pages 368 and 369):** Low
- **Sort the evidence (page 370):** Medium
- **Practice (page 371):** Medium
- **Your task (page 372):** Low
- **Your draft (page 373):** Low
- **Check your work (pages 374 and 375):** 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.

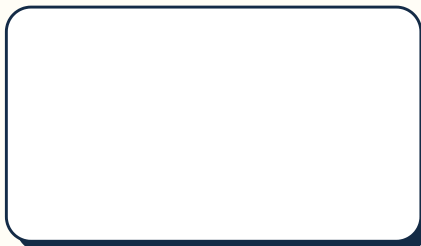
Sources

- 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 the summary line and the first paragraph aloud.

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 5 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: 5 min.

✂ Short on time: skip this page. Skip this page. Define remit and public record aloud in one minute.

💬 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 read page one fast, because she has a lot to say.

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.

This page continues page 361. The notes for both pages are on the sheet for page 361.

Reading passage

One request the committee can answer

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: A practice run on a bench

At 5:40 p.m. on a Tuesday, twenty minutes before the parks committee meets, Gia is reading her public comment out loud to Mateo. Item 4 on the agenda proposes turning off the park's court lights and closing the lighted courts at 8 p.m., because nearby residents have complained about evening noise. Gia, who grew up in Fort Greene, wants to speak against it. It is her first time at a public meeting.

The rules are simple. Sign up by 5 p.m., speak for two minutes, and know that comments and speakers' names become part of the public record. Written comments may be sent in before the meeting too. Gia's problem is length. On Monday night, she wrote three pages. Page one alone takes two minutes and forty seconds.

Mateo is timing Gia from a bench, and he listens the way a committee member might. He follows all of it. He still could not tell anyone what she wants the committee to do. Instead of rewriting her draft, he asks one question. If they only remember one sentence, what is it? Whatever she answers, he says, that sentence goes first.

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

Stop and think. Mateo asks what one sentence the committee should remember. Why is that more helpful than rewriting Gia's draft?

⌚ Pacing

Reading: about 5 min (612 words). Short on time: read it aloud together, pausing at each Stop and think.

❓ Stop and think

1. After “The story: A practice run on a bench”:

Mateo asks what one sentence the committee should remember. Why is that more helpful than rewriting Gia's draft?

2. After “Cutting to the remit”:

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

3. After “How public comment works in real places”:

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

Cutting to the remit

An **agenda item** is one topic listed on a meeting's official schedule of business. Item 4 is narrow: court lights and a closing time. Gia's draft asks the committee not to close the park, which nobody has proposed. A **remit** is the set of matters that a committee or other body is responsible for and can act on. Page two, about the bus, is a real problem outside the parks committee's remit. Case 10 taught you to send a problem to the office responsible, so the bus goes to a different office on a different day.

The new skill is fitting a request to the body's remit and time limit. It builds on Case 4. There, the crew prepared a comment for a nonprofit board, and you learned that a **proposal** is a change that someone suggests and that has not been approved yet. You also learned that a **decision-maker** is the person or group with the power to make a particular choice. The agenda shows the chain. The committee makes a recommendation, and the full council decides.

Gia's answer to Mateo's question becomes the spine of the comment. Name item 4. Share what she counted: twenty or thirty people on the courts between 8 and 9. Explain why it matters: a lot of them work late. End with one request the committee can act on: keep the lights on until 9 on weekdays this summer.

The comment should also acknowledge the other side. A nearby resident wrote that the courts are good for the neighborhood but that late noise carries into their apartment, and they have kids with school in the morning. A request for 9 p.m. instead of 8 p.m. gives the committee a middle option.

Finally, Gia cuts her friend's private situation. A **public record** is information a government keeps that anyone can ask to see, such as meeting comments. The story is her friend's, not hers.

? Stop and think. How could Gia's comment respond to the resident's concern about noise?

How public comment works in real places

Every body sets its own rules. Seattle City Council, for example, takes spoken comments in person or by phone and written comments by email, and each speaker gets up to two minutes (Seattle City Council, no date listed). A Philadelphia guide walks residents through signing up, finding the agenda item and fitting a point into the time limit (The Philadelphia Citizen, March 10, 2025). Students have used this process too. In Newark, a student coalition brought its own research and specific requests to the school board (Chalkbeat Newark, November 26, 2025).

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

This page continues page 363. The notes for both pages are on the sheet for page 363.

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This page continues page 363. The notes for both pages are on the sheet for page 363.

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

➤ Item 4 is only about the court lights and closing time. The committee only recommends.

What it leaves out

➤ How many residents complained, and whether other closing times were 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

➤ Sign up by 5:00 p.m., 2 minutes to speak, a written option, and names go public.

What it leaves out

➤ How the full council usually treats the committee's recommendation.

Case 19 | Look at the evidence

| Grades 9–10 educator edition

⌚ Pacing

Full chapter: 6 min.

✂ Short on time: 5 min. Students fill in only the What it shows boxes for Evidence A and B.

💬 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

➤ Gia cares about the park. Her request is "Please don't close the park."

What it leaves out

➤ The item number, the court lights and 8 p.m. Item 4 does not close the park.

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

➤ This resident likes the courts but hears late noise at home. Their kids have school.

What it leaves out

➤ What time the noise becomes a problem for this family.

What is still missing from the evidence?

➤ How many residents complained and when the noise happens, whether other hours were considered, and what court users who cannot come at 6 p.m. think.

Case 19 | Look at the evidence | Grades 9–10 educator edition

⌚ Pacing

Full chapter: 6 min.

✂ Short on time: 5 min. Read Evidence C and D aloud. 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.

Key idea: remit

On your own Read the key idea and the code of ethics, then answer the question in the box. About 7 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

A written comment lets ____.

→ A written comment lets court users who work during the 6 p.m. meeting reach the committee before it makes its recommendation.

⌚ Pacing

Full chapter: 7 min.

✂ Short on time: skip this page. Assign the key idea as reading for the next class.

💬 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 368. The notes for both pages are on the sheet for page 368.

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 committee's view is missing. I would ask whether it looked at other closing times, such as 9 p.m.

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 6 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. It names the item and the exact proposal. A gets the proposal wrong, and C uses up time without asking for anything.

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 it. Many court users work until evening, so after 8 is their time to play.

Rewrite phrase 2

➤ Please keep the lights on until 9 p.m. on weekdays through the summer.

⌚ Pacing

Full chapter: 6 min.

✂ Short on time: 5 min. Vote on the three openings. Skip the marked draft, because the task covers it.

💬 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.

Grades 9–10**Your task**

On your own Read the steps and fill in the planner boxes before you start your draft. About 8 minutes.

Cut Gia’s long draft into a 90-second comment, then write a note explaining what you cut and why.

Use: Gia’s draft summary, the agenda and the Seattle comment page as a real example.

You’ll make: 90-second comment plus a 100-word cutting note

Time: 50 minutes

- 1 Reread Gia’s draft in Evidence C and item 4 in Evidence A.
- 2 Sort each part of the draft into Keep or Cut in the planner.
- 3 Rewrite the comment so Gia can read it aloud in 90 seconds or less.
- 4 Keep four parts: the item, one observation, why it matters and one request.
- 5 Leave out private details about other people.
- 6 Write a cutting note of about 100 words that gives a reason for each cut.
- 7 Time the comment aloud with a partner.

Prefer typing? Scan to open the online workspace.

Keep

Item 4 and the 8 p.m. lights. The count of twenty to thirty people. People work late. One request.

Cut

“Don’t close the park.” The friend’s private situation. Page two about the bus. The line about never listening.

Gia’s request in one sentence

Keep the court lights on until 9 p.m. on weekdays through the summer.

Pacing

Full chapter: 8 min.

✂ Short on time: 8 min.

Say this

“Gia’s draft has good material in it. Which sentence does she most need to keep?” — Accept the count of people, then ask for the request.

Watch for

Misconception: Students cut Gia’s voice along with the extra material. **Listen for:** “I made it sound professional.” **Then:** Ask which sentence still sounds like Gia. Keep one plain detail, such as her café shifts.

Support

- Cutting checklist
- Model before-and-after paragraph

Heat check

Low.

Standards

Common Core: RI.9-10.1; W.9-10.1; W.9-10.5; SL.9-10.1.c; SL.9-10.1.d.

C3 Framework: D2.Civ.9.9-12; D2.Civ.1.9-12; D4.8.9-12.

The Case plan sheet gives each code in plain words.

Answer key

A strong response:

- Keeps the four essential parts
- Removes private details
- Preserves the speaker’s voice
- Explains cuts clearly

Your draft

On your own Write your draft in the boxes, using your planner from the page before. About 18 minutes.

Gia's 90-second comment

Good evening. I'm commenting on item ____.

➤ Good evening. I'm Gia, 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. On weekday evenings, I've counted twenty to thirty people on the courts between 8 and 9. Many of us work until evening, so after 8 is when we can play. I understand the concern about noise from nearby residents. I'm asking the committee to recommend keeping the lights on until 9 p.m. on weekdays through the summer. Thank you.

Cutting note, about 100 words

I cut ____ because ____.

➤ I cut "Please don't close the park," because item 4 turns off the lights at 8 p.m. It does not close the park. I cut the part about Gia's friend. It is her friend's private story, and comments go on the public record. I kept the point that many people work late. I cut page two about the bus, because the parks committee cannot change bus routes. I cut the line about never listening to young people, because it asks the committee for nothing. I kept Gia's count, because she saw it herself.

⌚ Pacing

Full chapter: 18 min.

✂ Short on time: 16 min. Students write the comment in class and finish the cutting note at home.

💬 Say this

"Read the comment aloud with a timer. Does it fit in 90 seconds?" — Partners time each other and repeat the request back.

👁 Watch for

Misconception: The cutting note explains cuts only by length. **Listen for:** "I cut it because it was too long." **Then:** Ask for a second reason: privacy, accuracy or purpose.

🔥 Heat check

■□□ Low.

➤ Answer key

What to notice in the sample:

1. Names the item and the exact proposal in the first lines.
2. Acknowledges another perspective in one sentence.
3. Explains a cut by privacy, not only by time.
4. Explains a cut by purpose.

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 the comment keep the item, one observation, why it matters and one request?	☒ Yes ☐ No
Did you remove private details about other people?	☒ Yes ☐ No
Does the comment still sound like Gia?	☒ Yes ☐ No
Does your cutting note give a reason for each cut?	☒ 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: 4 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 with the case rubric, and the cutting note is checked for a clear reason behind each cut.

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.

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.

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 whose job includes bus routes. Gia would need its agenda and comment rules, the same steps as for item 4.

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

➤ Gia could say she understands the noise concern and ask for lights until 9 on weekdays, not later.

- 3 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, which the rules allow. Gia could also tell other court users about item 4.

My take

My claim: ____.

➤ Gia should name item 4, share her count of people on the courts and ask for lights until 9 on weekdays.

The best evidence is ____, because ____.

➤ The agenda, because it shows item 4 is about the lights and that the committee only recommends.

⌚ Pacing

Full chapter: 8 min.

✂ Short on time: 4 min. Use question 4 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

Someone who disagrees might say ____.

☞ The noise is a real problem for families nearby, so the lights should go off at 8.

- The resident showed that the noise starts well before 9 p.m.

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.

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 9–10 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.