

Case 4: Who gets a say when a shared room changes?

The Common Room’s board is weighing paid rentals on two free evenings, so the crew prepares a comment before the meeting.

On your own Read What happened. Underline who decides and what the board is considering. About 6 minutes.

Your role: You’re the one who checks the budget figures before the crew speaks to the board. **New skill:** Weigh the trade-offs of each option.



Mari shows Sami a printed schedule.

What happened

It is the Friday after the crew’s first screening, and the board meeting is coming up. A small neighborhood nonprofit runs the Common Room alongside the bookshop. The nonprofit’s board is considering paid rentals on two evenings a week to help cover staffing. No vote has happened yet.

Mari, 19, works the bookshop counter and closes the shop. She knows that “just keep it free” does not pay the evening staff. Sami runs a print workshop in the room after her afternoon shift. It is one of the few step-free rooms nearby.

Caio, 24, runs the crew’s Tuesday film night. Tuesday is one of the evenings Option B would rent out. Mateo already has a headline for a petition. The crew agrees the room matters, but they do not agree on the best schedule.

Your question: Which option should the crew support, and what should they ask the board?

Key terms

On your own Read each key term and its example. Then write your first guess in the box. About 5 minutes.

Proposal A proposal is a change that someone suggests and that has not been approved yet.

En español: propuesta

In this case: Option B is a proposal on the board's agenda. No vote has been taken, so it is not a decision yet.

Trade-off A trade-off is a choice where getting one benefit means accepting a cost or giving something up.

En español: compensación entre opciones

In this case: Paid rentals help close the \$200 weekly gap but take away free evenings Sami and Dec use.

Decision-maker A decision-maker is the person or group with the power to make a particular choice.

En español: quien toma la decisión

In this case: The nonprofit board decides, not a city community board and not the crew.

Who is involved



Mari

Closes the bookshop, then stays for zine night

"I'm the one they pay to lock up, and I'm also one of the people using this room after. I can't pretend either half away."



Sami

Runs a print workshop in the room

"We keep deciding what the evening people need. Has anyone asked them yet?"

Before you look at the evidence, what do you think the crew should ask the board for?

[illegible]

Reading passage

Two free evenings and a \$200 gap

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 4 minutes.

Words to know

- **Proposal:** A proposal is a change that someone suggests and that has not been approved yet.
- **Trade-off:** A trade-off is a choice where getting one benefit means accepting a cost or giving something up.
- **Decision-maker:** A decision-maker is the person or group with the power to make a particular choice.
- **Framing:** Framing is choosing which parts of a situation a message brings forward.

The story: The room might change

The Common Room is more than a screening space. A small neighborhood nonprofit runs it alongside the bookshop. Now the nonprofit's board is thinking about renting the room to paying groups on two evenings a week. The money would help pay the evening staff. No vote has happened yet.

The crew cares about the room, but each friend sees the plan differently. Mateo already has a petition headline. Mari works the bookshop counter and closes the shop at night. "Free nights matter," she writes. "So does paying whoever stays to lock up. That's me." Sami runs a print workshop in the room after her afternoon shift. It is one of the few step-free rooms nearby. She asks a question nobody has answered: "Has anyone asked the evening regulars?"

? **Stop and think.** Why might Mari see both sides of this plan more clearly than Mateo?

Reading the options

In Case 1, you learned to find the original source. Here, that means reading the board's agenda instead of a petition headline. The agenda lists three options. Option A keeps the free evenings, but the money gap stays. Option B replaces the free Tuesday and Thursday evenings with paid rentals. Option C tests one rental evening for six weeks while the board looks for more funding.

Each option is a **proposal**. A proposal is a change that someone suggests and that has not been approved yet. Each one is also a **trade-off**. A trade-off is a choice where getting one benefit means accepting a cost or giving something up.

Reading the options, continued

The budget note gives the numbers. Evening staffing and utilities cost \$600 a week. Grants and donations bring in \$400. That leaves a \$200 gap. Each rental is expected to add \$120. Two rentals would cover the gap if people book them. One rental would leave \$80 still missing. Your job is to check these figures before the crew speaks to the board.

Case 1 taught you that **framing** is choosing which parts of a situation a message brings forward. Option B frames the \$200 gap as the problem. It brings forward the money. It leaves out who loses those evenings.

? **Stop and think.** What does Option B cost, and who pays that cost?

Who gets a say in real life

A **decision-maker** is the person or group with the power to make a particular choice. Here, it is the nonprofit's board. In New York City, the decision-maker for library hours was the city. Budget cuts ended Sunday hours at library branches in 2023, and Brooklyn's last Sunday was December 17, 2023 (NY1, November 17, 2023). In 2024, the city restored the money, and Sunday service returned (NYC Mayor's Office, July 1, 2024). Council members thanked New Yorkers who called and wrote (New York City Council, July 14, 2024).

? **Stop and think.** How is the Common Room's board different from the city government that restored library Sundays?

Sources

Real source | NY1 | November 17, 2023

Public libraries over the next two weeks to begin closing on Sundays

Real source | NYC Mayor's Office | July 1, 2024

Mayor Adams Celebrates \$58.3 Million Investment in City's Three Library Systems

Real source | New York City Council | July 14, 2024

NYC Council, Library Leaders, and New Yorkers Celebrate Library Budget Restorations to Restore Full Service, as Branches Reopen and Reinstate Services on Sunday for First Time in Months

Look at the evidence

On your own Read each document. For each one, write what it shows and what it leaves out. About 10 minutes.

Evidence A | Board agenda, Wednesday 6:30 p.m. meeting

The proposal

Evening rentals, for discussion. Option A: keep the current free evenings; the funding gap remains. Option B: replace Tuesday and Thursday evenings with paid rentals. Option C: pilot one rental evening for six weeks while seeking additional funding. No vote has been taken.

Look closely: Is this a vote or a discussion? Which words tell you?

What it shows

One question I still have

Evidence B | Weekly budget note for the board

The budget note

Evening staffing and utilities: \$600. Current grants and donations: \$400. Each paid rental is projected to add \$120 after its extra costs. Two bookings would add \$240; one would add \$120. Demand is uncertain.

Look closely: Which number is a guess, and what could change it?

What it shows

One question I still have

Look at the evidence, continued

Evidence C | Listening notes from evening users

The missing voices

Sami works afternoons. Dec rehearses on Thursdays. Mari closes the shop. A nearby resident worries about late noise. The proposed meeting time overlaps with several shifts.

Look closely: Whose voice is missing from these four notes?

What it shows

One question I still have

What is still missing from the evidence?

Notes

Key idea: trade-offs

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

The board is weighing a **proposal** about the free evenings. A proposal is a change that someone suggests and that has not been approved yet. Option B would help close the \$200 weekly gap, but it would end the free Tuesday and Thursday evenings. A **trade-off** is a choice where getting one benefit means accepting a cost or giving something up. Every option on the agenda has one, including the one you prefer.

Carol Bacchi's policy-analysis approach asks what a proposed solution assumes the problem is. Option B treats the \$200 gap as the problem and two free evenings as the price. That leaves two questions open: who loses those evenings, and what happens if bookings come in lower than projected? Ask the same questions about your own favorite option.

A **decision-maker** is the person or group with the power to make a particular choice. Here, the nonprofit's board controls its own schedule. A community board or a city agency would follow other rules. A strong comment names the proposal, explains one effect with evidence and asks for a decision the board can make. The board can still choose an option the crew did not ask for.

Professional standards

Real source | American Society for Public Administration (ASPA)

ASPA Code of Ethics: 5. Fully Inform and Advise

"Provide accurate, honest, comprehensive, and timely information and advice to elected and appointed officials and governing board members"

In plain words: ASPA members agree to give decision-makers, such as board members, accurate and complete information.

Question: The budget note projects \$120 more per rental. What should it also tell the board about how certain that is?

Your answer

The note should also tell the board ____.

A real district let students propose and vote on how shared school spaces and money would change.



A city pilot that changes a shared space for a trial run, so neighbors can test trade-offs before anything is permanent.

[illegible]

Sort the evidence

On your own Follow each option to its consequences. Mark the consequences that depend on a projection. About 8 minutes.

Follow each option to its consequences. Which consequences depend on a projection, and who carries the cost if it misses?

Option B: paid rentals replace Tuesday and Thursday evenings

A projected \$240 would cover the \$200 gap if both evenings book

Who is affected

Check: What happens if bookings fall short of the projection?

Option C: one rental evening piloted for six weeks

A projected \$80 gap remains while the board seeks funding and reviews the pilot

Who is affected

Check: What happens if bookings fall short of the projection?

Dec loses Thursday rehearsals and Mari's late evenings stop being usable

Who is affected

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 _____.

Practice: choose a response

On your own Choose what the crew should ask for first and explain why. Then fix the two marked lines. About 6 minutes.

What should the crew ask the board for first?

- ☐ **A** Post that the board is taking away the free nights.
- ☐ **B** Ask for the budget assumptions, who uses each evening and a way to comment without attending.
- ☐ **C** Support whichever option brings in the most money.

Why I chose it

Improve a draft

A student's first draft

1 The board should not take away our free nights. The Common Room is important to the community and a lot of people use it. I have been coming here for movie nights since it opened and it's one of the only places we can all hang out without paying. Renting it out just shows **2** the board cares more about money than people. Sami and Dec would lose their spot and that is not fair. Please keep it free for everyone. Thank you for listening.

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

Rewrite phrase 1

Rewrite phrase 2

Grades 6—8

Your task

On your own Read the steps. Fill in the planner boxes before you start your draft.

Make a people map of who uses the room, then write a short note to the board asking one budget question and one access question.

Use: The agenda and listening notes; the budget note with the \$200 example worked out.

You'll make: People map plus a 4—6 sentence note

Time: 45 minutes

- 1 Circle the board on the agenda and underline “No vote has been taken.”
- 2 Find the gap: $\$600 - \$400 = \$200$.
- 3 Put each person from the listening notes on the people map.
- 4 Mark one person who might miss the meeting.
- 5 Write a note of four to six sentences in the Your draft box.
- 6 Ask one question about money and one about who can use the room.

Show it your way

Write it: Write 4—6 sentences with the frame “I use the room when __. Could the board explain __?”

Say it: Practice a 45-second comment with a partner who plays a board member and asks you one question.

Show it: Finish the people map: who uses the room, on which evening, and who might miss the meeting, with a question mark beside each missing voice.



Prefer typing? Scan to open the online workspace.

Your task, continued

Who decides

The weekly gap

$\$600 - \$400 =$

Someone who might miss the meeting

Your draft

Your note to the board

I use the room when _____. Could the board explain _____?

Check your work

On your own Answer the Check your work questions and mark your level in each rubric row. Then write one change you made. About 5 minutes.

Does your note name the board as the decision-maker?	☐ Yes ☐ No
Does it ask one question about money?	☐ Yes ☐ No
Does it ask one question about who can use the room?	☐ Yes ☐ No
Does it treat the agenda as a proposal, not a final decision?	☐ Yes ☐ No

How your work is scored

Mark one box in each row.

Skill	Beginning	Developing	Proficient	Advanced
Evidence	☐ No figures or perspectives.	☐ Mentions money or people vaguely.	☐ Uses one figure and one affected perspective accurately.	☐ Uses figures conditionally and names an uncertainty.
Reasoning	☐ Assigns bad motives to the board.	☐ States a preference without addressing the gap.	☐ Recommends an option and addresses the gap.	☐ Weighs trade-offs across options and explains the choice.
Audience & purpose	☐ Speaks to the wrong decision-maker.	☐ Addresses the board but asks for nothing specific.	☐ Makes a request the board can act on.	☐ Requests a process that includes people who can't attend.
Revision	☐ No change.	☐ Tone edits only.	☐ Replaces a motive claim with evidence.	☐ Adds a figure, a perspective and a follow-up request.

One change I made

This image shows a single page from a notebook or ledger. The page is white with light blue horizontal ruling lines spaced evenly apart. There are no vertical margin lines, and the page is completely blank except for the lines. The right edge of the page shows a dark binding strip.

Questions to discuss

On your own Write a short answer to each question. Then finish My take. About 8 minutes.

- 1** Mari is paid to close the shop and also uses the room at night. How does that shape what she asks for?

- 2** If the board chooses an option the crew did not support, how should the crew tell the group what happened?

My take

I think the crew should ___ because ___.

The evidence that changed my first guess is ___.

One question I still have is ___.

Talk about this case at home

Case 4: Who gets a say when a shared room changes?

In this case, a community room's board is weighing whether to rent out two free evenings to cover its costs. Your student used a budget note and notes from evening users to write a comment the board could act on.

Questions to talk about

- 1 Who decides the hours at a public library or community center?
- 2 What should a group know before it asks a board for a change?
- 3 How can people give input if they cannot attend a meeting?

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



See the case online.