

Case 9: What is on your ballot, and where do you check?

Content note

This case explains general rules. It is not legal advice for your situation.

Overview

Students read a story in which Dec, who turns 18 in October, looks past the headline race on his sample ballot. He finds a school board race, a city council race and a transit bond. They compare the ballot with a creator’s voter guide that mixes facts with picks, and they read Vote.gov’s guidance for people 18 and under. They then write a personal checklist of official sources for registration, deadlines and their own sample ballot.

Before this case

Students should already be able to:

- summarize a short source accurately
- tell a fact from a recommendation
- write an explanation for a named reader

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- explain what one local office does, including what it does not control
- point readers to official, address-based sources to verify
- keep the language neutral, with no picks
- compare how two guides treat the same contest

Materials

- This chapter, one copy per student
- Evidence A, B, C and D
- USAGov’s page on sample ballots and voter guides

The task in this edition

Task: Write a nonpartisan explainer on one local contest: what the office does, what’s on the ballot, and where to verify.

Students make: Explainer, 250—350 words

Pacing

Opener (page 160): 5 min. Short on time: 4 min. Read What happened aloud. Skip the group-chat excerpt.

Key terms (pages 161 and 162): 5 min. Short on time: skip. Define sample ballot and voter guide aloud in one minute.

Look at the evidence (page 166): 10 min. Short on time: 9 min. Students fill in only the What it shows boxes.

Look at the evidence (page 167): 6 min. Short on time: 4 min. Read Evidence D aloud; skip its boxes.

Key idea (pages 168 and 169): 8 min. Short on time: 4 min. Read the SPJ row only. Skip In the news.

Sort the evidence (pages 170 and 171): 7 min. Short on time: skip.

Pacing, continued

Practice (page 172): 6 min. Short on time: 5 min. Take the vote. Skip Improve a draft.

Your task (pages 173 and 174): 8 min. Short on time: 6 min. Students fill in only the office and verify boxes.

Your draft (page 175): 22 min. Short on time: 18 min. Students write the office and verify sections in class and finish the comparison at home.

Check your work (pages 176 and 177): 8 min. Short on time: skip. Collect drafts and score them with the rubric yourself.

Questions to discuss (pages 178 and 179): 12 min. Short on time: skip.

Talk about this case at home (page 180): at home.

Periods: full chapter 97 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.9-10.2 Write an explanatory text that presents complex ideas and information clearly and accurately.

W.9-10.5 Strengthen writing by planning, revising, editing or rewriting, focusing on what matters most for the purpose and audience.

Case 9 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.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 local, state and national offices on the ballot.

D2.Civ.2.9-12 Analyze the role of citizens in the U.S. political system, including how participation has changed over time. In this case: Students analyze the role of voters and changes in who can vote over time.

D3.1.9-12 Gather information from sources with a wide range of views, using origin, authority, structure, context and corroboration to choose them. In this case: Students select official election sources by authority.

Codes of ethics

- **SPJ Code of Ethics:** Seek Truth and Report It
- **RTDNA Code of Ethics:** Opening statement (before the guiding principles)

Codes of ethics, continued

- **Credo for Ethical Communication:** “We advocate sharing information, opinions, and feelings...” (one of nine unnumbered principles)

Heat map

- **Opener (page 160):** Low
- **Key terms (pages 161 and 162):** Low
- **Look at the evidence (page 166):** Low
- **Look at the evidence (page 167):** Low
- **Key idea (pages 168 and 169):** Low
- **Sort the evidence (pages 170 and 171):** Medium
- **Practice (page 172):** Low
- **Your task (pages 173 and 174):** Medium
- **Your draft (page 175):** Medium
- **Check your work (pages 176 and 177):** Low

Try it at your school

Find your official election information.

- With a trusted adult, visit [vote.gov](https://www.vote.gov) and choose your state or territory
- Check eligibility, preregistration and registration rules for your age
- Find a sample ballot for your address and circle one local office

Try it at your school, continued

- Learn what that office does before researching candidates

Who to ask: Your county or local election office, a civics teacher, a school librarian

Safety: Never share your address, birthdate or voter information in group chats. Use official government sites (.gov) for registration.

Sources

- [Vote.gov](https://www.vote.gov), “Your state or territory’s voting information,” No date listed
- [Vote.gov](https://www.vote.gov), “Preparing to vote: age 18 and under,” No date listed
- [USAGov](https://www.usa.gov), “Sample ballots and voter guides,” No date listed
- National Constitution Center, “The 26th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution,” No date listed

Case 9: What is on your ballot, and where do you check?

Dec turns 18 before the election on November 3, 2026, and his feed covers only one race on his ballot.

On your own Read What happened. Underline the contests Mateo finds below the big race. About 5 minutes.

Your role: You're the one who finds Dec's official sample ballot before anyone tells him how to vote.
New skill: Check an official source for your own area.



Mateo and Gia work in a notebook at a café table.

What happened

It is Sunday at the library desk. Dec turns 18 in October, before the general election on November 3, 2026. His feed is full of posts about one big race. Mateo and Gia are helping him find out what else is on his ballot.

They look at a sample ballot for the November election. The front shows the big race from Dec's feed. The second page has more: a school board race, a city council seat and Measure T, a transit bond. Mateo notices that nobody is posting about Measure T.

A creator's voter guide is also going around. It says registration closes "the 14th," but it never names a state. It also tells people how to vote on the school board race and Measure T. Gia is writing a reminder for the group chat.

Mateo has his own problem. He may still be registered at his mom's address in New Bedford, Massachusetts. Dec says he does not need anyone to pick for him. He needs to know what is on his ballot and whether he is registered in time.

Your question: What is on Dec's ballot, and where should he check his own information?

🕒 Pacing

Full chapter: 5 min.

✂ Short on time: 4 min. Read What happened aloud. Skip the group-chat excerpt.

💬 Say this

"Dec's feed is full of one race. What else do you think is on his ballot?" — List guesses on the board. Keep them for the sample ballot.

👁 Watch for

Misconception: Students think a ballot holds only the big national races. **Listen for:** "It's just president or Congress." **Then:** Point to the second page of the sample ballot in the story: school board, city council, Measure T.

📖 Support

- Read What happened aloud while students follow along.
- Explain that a measure is a question voters decide directly, like Measure T.

🔥 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.

Sample ballot A sample ballot is a preview of the contests and measures that will appear on your ballot.

En español: boleta de muestra

In this case: Dec's sample ballot lists a school board race, a city council seat and Measure T below the big race from his feed.

Registration Registration is signing up with your election office so that you are on the list of people who can vote.

En español: inscripción electoral

In this case: Dec turns 18 in October and needs to know whether he is registered in time. The guide's deadline names no state.

Voter guide A voter guide is a document that explains or recommends choices in an election.

En español: guía para votantes

In this case: A creator's voter guide mixes one deadline with two picks: "vote Candidate B" and "Measure T: yes, obviously."

Jurisdiction A jurisdiction is the place or area where a particular government or rule has authority.

En español: jurisdicción

In this case: Mateo may still be registered in New Bedford, Massachusetts. A different place can mean a different ballot and a different deadline.

Who is involved



Mateo

Helping Dec read the sample ballot

"Dec's feed is all the big race. Then you flip the sample ballot: school board, city council, a transit bond. Nobody's posting about Measure T."



Gia

Writing the group-chat reminder

"The creator's guide says 'registration closes the 14th.' Whose 14th? It doesn't even say which state."

⌚ Pacing

Full chapter: 5 min.

✂ Short on time: skip this page. Skip this page. Define sample ballot and voter guide aloud in one minute.

💬 Say this

"Which key term explains why Mateo's ballot might not match Dec's?" — Wait for jurisdiction.

👁 Watch for

Misconception: Students treat a voter guide and a sample ballot as the same document. **Listen for:** "The guide is the ballot." **Then:** Ask which one lists the contests for an address and which one tells you how to vote.

📖 Support

- Pair students who share a language to explain each term in their own words.
- Many election offices publish Spanish materials. Show where to find them.
- **Cognates:** election (elección), candidate (candidato), jurisdiction (jurisdicción), official (oficial), district (distrito), amendment (enmienda), constitution (constitución), vote (voto).

🌡 Heat check

■□□ Low.

🔑 Answer key

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

Before you look at the evidence, what do you think is on Dec's ballot?

➡ My first guess is that it is mostly the big race, because that is what everyone posts about.

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.

Reading passage

Your ballot is not your feed

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

- **Sample ballot:** A sample ballot is a preview of the contests and measures that will appear on your ballot.
- **Voter guide:** A voter guide is a document that explains or recommends choices in an election.
- **Registration:** Registration is signing up with your election office so that you are on the list of people who can vote.
- **Jurisdiction:** A jurisdiction is the place or area where a particular government or rule has authority.
- **Claim:** A claim is a statement that something is true. You can check a claim with evidence.
- **Material connection:** A material connection is a relationship with a brand, like payment or a free product, that viewers might not expect.

The story: The second page

Dec turns 18 in October, a few weeks before the general election on November 3, 2026. If his feed is any guide, only one race matters. Every post is about the same big contest. On Sunday at the library desk, Mateo and Gia help him look past it.

They pull up a sample ballot for the November election. The front page matches the feed. The second page does not. It lists a school board race, a city council seat and Measure T, a transit bond. Mateo says what everyone is thinking: nobody is posting about Measure T.

A creator's voter guide is circulating in their group chat: "All you need for November!! Registration closes the 14th. School board: vote Candidate B, the only one who cares about students. Measure T: yes, obviously." Dec reads it and says he does not need anyone picking for him. He has two questions. What is on his ballot, and is he registered in time?

Gia is writing a reminder for the chat, and Mateo has an uncomfortable realization. He moved from New Bedford for college, and he may still be registered at his mom's address in Massachusetts. Your role in this case is to find Dec's official sample ballot before anyone tells him how to vote.

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: The second page”:** Why does the guide's deadline fail as a fact even if it happens to be right somewhere?
2. **After “Sorting what can be checked”:** Which contest on the sample ballot could affect Dec's school or his bus?
3. **After “Young voters and the rules”:** When could a voter guide that recommends choices help a first-time voter?

❓ **Stop and think.** Why does the guide’s deadline fail as a fact even if it happens to be right somewhere?

Sorting what can be checked

A **sample ballot** is a preview of the contests and measures that will appear on your ballot. A **voter guide** is a document that explains or recommends choices in an election. The sample ballot is the original source, the Case 1 skill, and the guide is someone’s reading of it. Case 1 also taught you that a **claim** is a statement that can be checked with evidence. The guide contains one checkable claim, the registration deadline, and it cannot be checked because it never names a state. Gia’s question is exact: whose 14th?

Case 8 gave you another question to ask, about a **material connection**, a relationship with a brand, like payment or a free product, that viewers might not expect. The guide does not say who wrote it or who funds it. That does not make its picks wrong. It does mean Dec should treat them as opinions from an unknown source.

The ballot also teaches something about power. A **jurisdiction** is the place or area where a particular government or rule has authority. Your address decides which contests appear on your ballot, and a friend two districts over may see different local races. A school board and a city council have different jobs. Before researching candidates, Dec can ask which office has power over the issue he cares about, such as his school or his bus.

Registration is signing up with your election office so that you are on the list of people who can vote. Deadlines vary by state, so Gia leaves the date out of her reminder. Her message is short: check your registration and your own sample ballot at Vote.gov, deadlines depend on your state, and please don’t post your address.

❓ **Stop and think.** Which contest on the sample ballot could affect Dec’s school or his bus?

Young voters and the rules

The Twenty-Sixth Amendment protects the right to vote for citizens 18 and older (National Constitution Center, no date listed). Its roots go back to World War II and the slogan “old enough to fight, old enough to vote” (The National WWII Museum, October 27, 2020). Most states now allow teens to preregister before 18, and some let 17-year-olds vote in primaries (Ballotpedia News, September 26, 2025).

Young people do vote. About 47 percent of 18- to 29-year-olds voted in 2024, with big differences by state (CIRCLE, April 14, 2025). Anika, who is 16, is checking whether she can preregister. She can also learn what the school board decides before she can vote on it.

This page continues page 163. The notes for both pages are on the sheet for page 163.

❓ Stop and think. When could a voter guide that recommends choices help a first-time voter?

Sources

Real source | Vote.gov | No date listed

Your state or territory's voting information

Real source | National Constitution Center | No date listed

The 26th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution

Real source | The National WWII Museum | October 27, 2020

“Old Enough to Fight, Old Enough to Vote”: The WWII Roots of the 26th Amendment

Real source | Ballotpedia News | September 26, 2025

Most states allow teenagers to pre-register to vote before turning 18, and some let them vote in primaries

Real source | CIRCLE (Tufts University) | April 14, 2025

New Data: Nearly Half of Youth Voted in 2024

Notes

[illegible]

This page continues page 163. The notes for both pages are on the sheet for page 163.

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 | Sample ballot

Sample ballot for the November general election

Federal: U.S. Representative. State: State Senator; Superior Court judge (retention). Local: Board of Education, District 3 (vote for two); City Council, Ward 5. Measures: Measure T, transit improvements bond.

Look closely: Which contests sit below the big race, and which one touches Dec's school?

What it shows

➤ Federal, state and local races, plus Measure T.

What it leaves out

➤ Which address it covers, and what each office does.

Evidence B | Voter guide post

A creator's voter guide

All you need for November!! Registration closes the 14th. School board: vote Candidate B, the only one who cares about students. Measure T: yes, obviously.

Look closely: Which line could you check, and which lines tell you how to vote?

What it shows

➤ One checkable deadline mixed with two picks on how to vote.

What it leaves out

➤ Which state the deadline is for, and who wrote and funds it.

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

⌚ Pacing

Full chapter: 10 min.

✂ Short on time: 9 min. Students fill in only the What it shows boxes.

💬 Say this

“Put one finger on a line you could check and one on a line that tells you how to vote.” — Use two highlighter colors if you have them.

👁 Watch for

Misconception: Students treat the guide's picks as facts because the guide sounds sure. **Listen for:** “It says obviously, so it's true.” **Then:** Ask what source could prove “Measure T: yes.” None can; it is a pick.

📄 Support

- Give each document on its own half-page.
- Read the sample ballot aloud, one level of government at a time.
- **Cognates:** election (elección), candidate (candidato), jurisdiction (jurisdicción), official (oficial), district (distrito), amendment (enmienda), constitution (constitución), vote (voto).

🔗 Stretch

- Ask why Gia's reminder leaves out a deadline on purpose, and what each reader has to do instead.

🔥 Heat check

■□□ Low.

Look at the evidence, continued

Evidence C | Group-chat draft

Gia's reminder

Check your registration and your own sample ballot at vote.gov. Deadlines depend on your state. Please don't post your address here.

Look closely: What does Gia share, and what does she ask friends to keep private?

What it shows

🔍 An official place to check, and a request to keep addresses private.

What it leaves out

🔍 Any deadline, because each state sets its own dates.

Evidence D | Statement

What Dec needs

"I turn 18 in October. I don't need someone picking for me. I need to know what's on my ballot and whether I'm registered in time for November."

Look closely: What two questions does Dec need answered, and which source answers each?

What it shows

🔍 Two questions: what is on his ballot, and is he registered in time?

What it leaves out

🔍 His state, his registration status and his deadline.

What is still missing from the evidence?

🔍 Dec's state, registration status and deadline, the sample ballot for his own address, and who wrote and funds the creator's guide.

⌚ Pacing

Full chapter: 6 min.

✂ Short on time: 4 min. Read Evidence D aloud; skip its boxes.

💬 Say this

"Put one finger on a line you could check and one on a line that tells you how to vote." — Use two highlighter colors if you have them.

👁 Watch for

Misconception: Students treat the guide's picks as facts because the guide sounds sure. **Listen for:** "It says obviously, so it's true." **Then:** Ask what source could prove "Measure T: yes." None can; it is a pick.

📄 Support

- Give each document on its own half-page.
- Read the sample ballot aloud, one level of government at a time.
- **Cognates:** election (elección), candidate (candidato), jurisdiction (jurisdicción), official (oficial), district (distrito), amendment (enmienda), constitution (constitución), vote (voto).

🔗 Stretch

- Ask why Gia's reminder leaves out a deadline on purpose, and what each reader has to do instead.

🔥 Heat check

■□□ Low.

Key idea: sample ballots

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

A **sample ballot** is a preview of the contests and measures that will appear on your ballot. A measure is a question that voters decide directly, such as Measure T. A **voter guide** is a document that explains or recommends choices in an election. The two have different purposes. Start with the ballot for your address, and then check a guide's facts apart from its picks.

Your address decides which contests appear on your ballot. A **jurisdiction** is the place or area where a particular government or rule has authority. A friend two districts over may see different local races. A school board and a city council have different jobs, so each one makes different decisions. Before you research candidates, find out which office has power over the issue you care about.

Registration is signing up with your election office so that you are on the list of people who can vote. Rules and deadlines vary by state, so do not copy a friend's deadline. The Twenty-Sixth Amendment protects the right to vote for citizens 18 and older. Most states let people preregister before they turn 18. Several states let 17-year-olds vote in a primary if they will be 18 by the general election.

Professional standards

Real source | Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ)

SPJ Code of Ethics: Seek Truth and Report It

"Label advocacy and commentary."

In plain words: Journalists who follow the SPJ code mark opinions and recommendations so readers can tell them apart from facts.

Question: The creator's guide mixes a registration deadline with "vote Candidate B." Which lines are checkable facts, and which are picks?

Your answer

Facts I can check: ____ Picks: ____

➤ **Facts I can check:** "Registration closes the 14th," though it names no state. **Picks:** "vote Candidate B" and "Measure T: yes, obviously."

⌚ Pacing

Full chapter: 8 min.

✂ Short on time: 4 min. Read the SPJ row only. Skip In the news.

💬 Say this

"The SPJ code says to label advocacy. Which lines in the creator's guide are advocacy?" — Wait for the two picks.

👁 Watch for

Misconception: Students treat the SPJ code as a law that creators must follow. **Listen for:** "The creator broke the rules." **Then:** Say: "SPJ's code binds no one by law. It shows how journalists label opinion."

📖 Support

- Read the quotation aloud. Point out the label: a real source, quoted word for word.

🔗 Stretch

- Use the RTDNA row: what would a guide that helps Dec decide include about the school board race?

🔥 Heat check

■□□ Low.

A square QR code located at the bottom left of the page, enclosed in a rounded rectangular box. To its right is the text "Real source | NPR | August 6, 2023". Below this is a bold headline: "Some states are trying to boost youth voter registration. Here's what they're doing". Underneath the headline is a sub-headline: "Explains preregistration and other state steps that let teens sign up before they turn 18."



Explains preregistration and other state steps that let teens sign up before they turn 18.



Rules differ by state, so where you live decides when you can register and what you vote on.

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 168. The notes for both pages are on the sheet for page 168.

Sort the evidence

On your own Match each of Dec's questions to the rule or office that answers it. Then write whose view is missing. About 7 minutes.

Separate the two questions Dec has: what is on his ballot, and can he vote. Which rules and offices answer each, and which source should he check first?

Which contests and measures appear on Dec's ballot

Who decides

His address and district lines, drawn through redistricting

Under which rule

Who lives with it

Your way in

🔗 [Vote.gov, which links to his state or local election office](#)

Whether Dec can register and vote in November

Who decides

Under which rule

Twenty-Sixth Amendment: the vote at 18 cannot be denied on account of age
State rules on preregistration, deadlines and 17-year-old primary voting

Who lives with it

Your way in

🔗 [Vote.gov, which links to his state or local election office](#)

⌚ Pacing

Full chapter: 7 min.

✂ Short on time: skip this page.

💬 Say this

“Dec has two questions. Which rule or office answers each one?” — Model the registration question together.

👁 Watch for

Misconception: Students think the Twenty-Sixth Amendment sets every voting rule. **Listen for:** “The Constitution says when you register.” **Then:** The amendment protects the vote at 18. States set registration rules and deadlines.

📄 Support

- Let students draw the arrows before they write sentences.

🔥 Heat check

■ ■ □ **Medium.** The missing-perspective question can turn to students' own eligibility.

Cool-down: Keep answers about Dec and his friends. No student shares their own or a family member's eligibility.

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 creator who wrote the guide. I would ask who wrote and funds it, and which state “the 14th” is for.

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 handwriting or other markings on the paper.

This page continues page 170. The notes for both pages are on the sheet for page 170.

Practice: choose a response

On your own Choose what you would do with a friend's sample ballot. Then fix the two marked phrases. About 6 minutes.

You live at a new address. A friend sends their sample ballot and says, "Just use this one." What should you do?

- ☐ A Use it, because you and your friend live in the same state.
- ☒ B Check your registration and find the official sample ballot for your address.
- ☐ C Use a creator's voter guide instead, since it covers the whole election.

Why I chose it

➤ B. Addresses in one state can fall in different districts, so A may give the wrong local races. C starts with opinions before the facts.

Improve a draft

A student's first draft

Guys the election is coming up and it's a big one!! **1** Registration closes on the 14th so do it now. Here's the voter guide I use, it tells you exactly who to vote for so you don't have to research. Also **2** drop your addresses and I'll check if you're registered for you. Only the big race really matters anyway, the rest is small stuff. My cousin in another state said the same deadline works for her too, so just use mine. Let's go vote!!

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

Rewrite phrase 1

➤ Registration deadlines depend on your state, so check yours at [vote.gov](https://www.vote.gov).

Rewrite phrase 2

➤ Check your own registration at [vote.gov](https://www.vote.gov). Don't share your address here.

⌚ Pacing

Full chapter: 6 min.

✂ Short on time: 5 min. Take the vote. Skip Improve a draft.

💬 Say this

"A friend sends their sample ballot and says, "Just use this one." What do you do?" — Take a vote before any discussion.

👁 Watch for

Misconception: Students choose A because the friend lives in the same state. **Listen for:** "Same state, same ballot." **Then:** Point to the key idea: a friend two districts over may see different local races.

📖 Support

- Read the three options aloud before students choose.

🌡 Heat check

■□□ Low.

➤ Answer key

A revised version: Election reminder: registration deadlines and voting options depend on your state, so check yours at [vote.gov](https://www.vote.gov), which links to your state's election office. You can also look up your sample ballot for your own address there. It shows everything you'll vote on, including school board and local measures, not just the big race. If you use a voter guide, check the facts it gives and remember its picks are someone's opinion. Under 18? Many states let you preregister, and some let 17-year-olds vote in primaries. Check your state's rules. No need to share your address here.

Grades 9–10

Your task

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

Write a nonpartisan explainer on one local contest: what the office does, what's on the ballot, and where to verify.

Use: Sample ballot, office descriptions and USA.gov page.

You'll make: Explainer, 250–350 words

Time: 50 minutes

- 1 Choose one local contest on the sample ballot in Evidence A.
- 2 Fill in the planner: what the office does, where to verify and how two guides treat the race.
- 3 Write a heading and one sentence that names the contest.
- 4 Explain what the office does and one decision it does not make.
- 5 Tell readers where to verify, starting with vote.gov.
- 6 Compare two guides fairly, and label any pick as the guide's opinion.
- 7 Write 250 to 350 words in all, with no picks, on the Your draft page.



Prefer typing? Scan to open the online workspace.

The contest I chose

➤ Board of Education, District 3 (vote for two)

What the office does

➤ Sets the district budget, hires the superintendent and approves policies like the school calendar. It does not run classrooms.

Case 9 | Your task | Grades 9–10 educator edition

⌚ Pacing

Full chapter: 8 min.

✂ Short on time: 6 min. Students fill in only the office and verify boxes.

💬 Say this

“Pick one local contest. Before you say anything about candidates, can you explain the job?” — Model the school board row together.

👁 Watch for

Misconception: The explainer drifts into recommending a candidate. **Listen for:** “So you should probably vote for her.” **Then:** Point to the success list: neutral language. Report the guide's pick as the guide's opinion.

📎 Support

- Explainer template
- Fact vs. opinion checklist

🔗 Stretch

- Compare how two guides describe the same measure.

🔥 Heat check

■ ■ □ **Medium.** Students may add picks for candidates or measures they support.

Cool-down: Remind students the product is nonpartisan. Replace any pick with where to check the facts.

📋 Standards

Common Core: RI.9-10.1; W.9-10.2; W.9-10.5; SL.9-10.1.c; SL.9-10.1.d.

C3 Framework: D2.Civ.1.9-12; D2.Civ.2.9-12; D3.1.9-12.

The Case plan sheet gives each code in plain words.

Your draft

On your own Write your draft in the boxes. Use your planner from the page before. About 22 minutes.

Your explainer, 250 to 350 words

 **School board, District 3:** what you are deciding. Below the big race on this November's sample ballot is the Board of Education, District 3. Voters choose two members. What the office does: the school board sets the district budget, hires the superintendent and approves policies like the school calendar. It does not run individual classrooms. Before you read any guide, ask what the board can change. What else is on the ballot: a city council seat and Measure T, a transit bond. Those are separate contests, and Measure T is about transit, not schools. Where to verify: ballots depend on your address, so check your own. Go to vote.gov and choose your state. It links to your state's election office, where you can find the sample ballot for your address and check your registration. Deadlines depend on your state, so do not copy a date from a post. USAGov also explains how a sample ballot differs from a voter guide. Comparing two guides: a creator's guide says, "vote Candidate B, the only one who cares about students." That is a recommendation, not a fact you can check. It also names no author. A county guide prints each candidate's statement in their own words, so readers can compare them and decide for themselves. This explainer does not recommend any candidate.

Case 9 | Your draft | Grades 9–10 educator edition

Pacing

Full chapter: 22 min.

 **Short on time:** 18 min. Students write the office and verify sections in class and finish the comparison at home.

Say this

"Read your explainer as a reader who supports another candidate. Does any sentence push you?" — Partners mark any sentence that favors a candidate.

Watch for

Misconception: The explainer copies the deadline from the creator's guide. **Listen for:** "Registration closes the 14th." **Then:** Replace the date with the official place to check it.

Heat check

 **Medium.** Students may add picks for candidates or measures they support.

Cool-down: Remind students the product is nonpartisan. Replace any pick with where to check the facts.

Answer key

What to notice in the sample:

1. Says what the office does not control, so readers ask the right office.
2. Separates two contests by what each one covers.
3. Labels the guide's pick as opinion and stays neutral.
4. Points readers to an official, address-based source.

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 8 minutes.

Does your explainer describe what the office does accurately? ☒ Yes ☐ No

Is the language neutral, with no picks? ☒ Yes ☐ No

Does it send readers to official sources to verify? ☒ Yes ☐ No

Does it compare the two guides fairly? ☒ Yes ☐ No

How your work is scored

Mark one box in each row.

Skill	Beginning	Developing	Proficient	Advanced
Evidence	☐ Copies one person's deadlines.	☐ Mentions official sources vaguely.	☐ Points to official sources for each person's state.	☐ Points to official sources and explains why rules differ.
Reasoning	☐ Treats a guide as the ballot.	☐ Mentions the ballot but not local contests.	☐ Separates ballot, guide and registration.	☐ Explains why local offices matter to the audience.
Audience & purpose	☐ Collects private info.	☐ Generic hype.	☐ Useful, private, nonpartisan.	☐ Includes people not yet eligible.
Revision	☐ No change.	☐ Adds a link.	☐ Replaces copied deadlines with official routes.	☐ Explains how each change helps friends in different situations.

Pacing

Full chapter: 8 min.

 Short on time: skip this page. Collect drafts and score them with the rubric yourself.

Say this

“Mark your level honestly. Then make one change and say why.” — Ask for one official source added or one pick removed.

Watch for

Misconception: Students keep a copied deadline. **Listen for:** “Registration closes the 14th.” **Then:** Point to the Evidence row. Replace the date with the official place to check it.

Heat check

 Low.

Answer key

How to assess: The explainer is scored for an accurate office description, neutral language, official sources and a fair comparison of the two guides.

Proficient looks like:

- **Evidence:** Points to official sources for each person's state.
- **Reasoning:** Separates ballot, guide and registration.
- **Audience & purpose:** Useful, private, nonpartisan.
- **Revision:** Replaces copied deadlines with official routes.

This image shows a single page 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 finish My take. About 12 minutes.

- 1 Which contest on the sample ballot could affect Dec's school or his bus?

➤ The Board of Education, District 3 race for his school, and Measure T for transit. Both sit below the big race.

- 2 Mateo may still be registered in New Bedford. Why might his ballot differ from Dec's?

➤ A ballot depends on your address. If Mateo is registered in Massachusetts, he gets that state's contests and deadline, not Dec's.

- 3 Anika is 16. How can she be part of this election before she can vote?

➤ She can check her state's preregistration rule and learn what the school board decides before she can vote on it.

- 4 When could a voter guide that recommends choices help a first-time voter?

➤ When it labels its picks as opinion and gets its facts right. A reader can check the facts and weigh the picks separately.

My take

My claim: ____.

➤ Dec should find his own sample ballot and registration status through official sources before he reads any guide.

The best evidence is ____, because ____.

➤ The sample ballot, because it lists local contests his feed never mentions.

⌚ Pacing

Full chapter: 12 min.

✂ Short on time: skip this page.

💬 Say this

“Answer with a detail from the evidence, not a candidate or party you like.” — Post the question numbers and take one answer per question.

🔗 Stretch

- Ask what one local office on the ballot decides, and how a student could learn that before researching candidates.
- Going further: Which election office covers your address? Find it through Vote.gov. If you live away from home for school, write one question asking that office which address and rules apply to you.
- Going further: Plan an election reminder for your own group chat. Who might a group chat miss? Link to an official source so nobody has to trust a screenshot.
- Going further: Record a one-minute audio guide that tells listeners how to find their own sample ballot. Then write the same steps as a checklist. Check that both lead to the same official page.
- Going further: With a trusted adult, go to Vote.gov and choose your state or territory. Check the registration rules for your age, then find the sample ballot for your address. Never share your address or birthdate in a group chat.
- Find your county's sample ballot for the next election
- Research the history of the Twenty-Sixth Amendment

Someone who disagrees might say ____.

🔑 A guide with picks saves time for a busy first-time voter.

I would change my mind if ____.

🔑 The creator's guide named its author and labeled its picks as opinion.

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 are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has rounded corners and a thin black border around the edges.

Heat check

■ ■ □ Question 3: Medium. Some students cannot vote for reasons other than age, and may feel singled out.

Cool-down: Keep answers about Anika. No student shares their own or a family member's eligibility.

Question 4 cool-down: Say: “We are not discussing any real candidate or party.” Return to the creator’s guide in Evidence B.

Talk about this case at home

Case 9: What is on your ballot, and where do you check?

In this case, a teen about to turn 18 finds local races on his ballot that his feed never mentions. Your student compared a sample ballot with a voter guide, then wrote a guide that points to official sources without telling anyone how to vote.

Questions to talk about

- 1 What offices appear on a local ballot, besides the big races?
- 2 Where can someone find official information about registering to vote?
- 3 How can you tell a fact in a voter guide from a recommendation?

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



See the case online.

Case 9 | Talk about this case at home | Grades 9–10 educator edition

Pacing

At home: this page takes no class time.

Say this

“Take this page home or read it with someone you trust.” —
Nobody needs to share their own voting information or
anyone else’s.