

Teacher Guide

Middle School

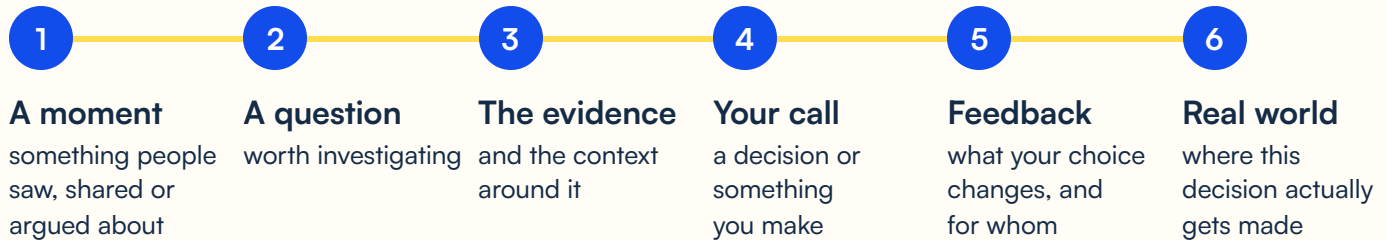
For grades 6—8

20 cases about media, law, policy and the decisions that shape your life. For every case: the opener, the case file, a reasoning page, a worked example and a one-period workshop plan.

How this edition works

Grades 6—8 classrooms, advisory periods and after-school groups, and older learners who need more scaffolding.

Each case starts from something people actually saw or argued about and works toward something students decide or make. Objectives stay explicit for you; students meet the ideas through what they investigate and create.



By the end, students can

- ✓ Separate what a source actually says from what someone claims it says, using short, read-aloud texts.
- ✓ Use the case's key words (claim, evidence, rule, decision-maker) accurately in speech and writing.
- ✓ Follow visible reasoning steps from an observation to a supported conclusion.
- ✓ Take part in supported discussion that builds on a partner's idea without speaking for anyone else.
- ✓ Produce a short, useful response in an oral, visual or written form that names a next step.

What's different in this edition

- Shorter reading segments, read aloud, with one or two evidence items instead of the full case file
- Every task shows its reasoning steps and offers sentence frames
- Students choose an oral, visual or written response
- Discussion is structured with roles and partner talk before writing
- Products are short and concrete: a message, a map, a chart or a card

Real, or made for this lesson?

Real source links to reporting, research or an official page you can check yourself.

Fictional case material was written for the story, so you can practise on it safely.

Plan the edition

Preparation

- Read the case story and its evidence page, and choose the one or two items students will handle.
- Print each chosen evidence item as a separate half-page card and enlarge the key sentence.
- Plan or record a read-aloud of any source longer than a few sentences.
- Make word cards from the case concepts, including the Spanish terms.
- Decide which response options (oral, visual, written) you will offer and how you will capture oral work.

Materials

- Evidence cards drawn from the case's evidence page
- Word cards from the case concepts
- The route's four steps printed as a checklist, plus its sentence frames
- Chart paper or mini whiteboards for visual responses
- A device for recording voice notes (optional)

Timing

Plan one 45-minute session per case. Keep each reading segment under five minutes, alternate reading with talk, and use the route's four steps as visible checkpoints. To split across two 25-minute sessions, stop after step 2.

Assessment

Use each route's four success criteria and the case rubric at the Developing and Proficient levels. Oral, visual and written responses count as equal evidence, and each student gets at least one recorded observation of discussion.

Supports that don't lower the bar

Vocabulary

Pre-teach three or four case concepts with their plain definitions and Spanish terms, and keep the word cards visible throughout.

Read-aloud

Read every source aloud at least once and offer a recording for replay; keep each reading segment short.

Bilingual planning

Plan for multilingual learners with the case glossary and the case page's Spanish explanation, allow first drafts in any language and pair students who share a language. Never ask a student to disclose a disability, immigration status, family finances or private records to take part.

Oral rehearsal

Let students talk before writing every time, using partner rehearsal with the route's sentence frames.

Other ways to respond

Offer the route's oral, visual and written options as equal choices, and allow dictation, sentence strips or a labeled sketch.

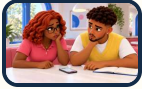
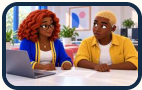
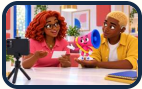
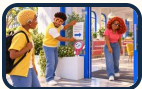
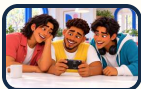
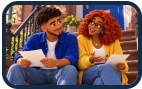
Framework

Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy (grades 6–8) and the C3 Framework for Social Studies State Standards

- Reading Informational Text (RI.6–8): citing evidence and evaluating whether evidence is sufficient
- Writing (W.6–8): short explanatory and argument writing
- Speaking and Listening: collaborative discussion (SL.8.1, with parallel standards in grades 6 and 7), presenting claims and findings (SL.8.4) and using multimedia and visual displays (SL.8.5)
- Literacy in History/Social Studies (RH.6–8): integrating visual information with text

Checked 2026-09-24. Alignment is described here, not certified or endorsed.

What's inside

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Case 1

Before you repost

What can a screenshot actually prove?

Most news about school closures, rule changes and events reaches students as a cropped clip in a group chat. Checking the original and posting a useful update keeps a whole community from acting on half a sentence.

In the real world

CrashCourse (YouTube), 2019 Check Yourself with Lateral Reading: Crash Course Navigating Digital Information #3

PolitiFact, 2022 Viral image shows fake story from The Atlantic about Biden

Mateo

Dale, I wanted that clip to be fake so badly I almost told everyone to ignore it. Let me find the full transcript first.

You'll make

Group-chat message, 3—4 sentences

Time

About 45 minutes

Level

Grades 6—8



The case file

Look at what's actually here before deciding what it means.

Fictional case material

1

Forwarded screenshot in the crew's group chat, Friday 4:52 p.m.

"They're removing access tonight.
Screening cancelled?"

Attached clip, 7 seconds.

Coordinator: "...we are removing access—" The clip ends there.



What was said right after this clip ends? Which word in the caption goes further than the clip itself?

Fictional case material

2

Room coordinator, full meeting transcript, Friday 3:30 p.m. meeting

"The side-door reader is broken. We are removing access through that reader tonight. Existing room bookings remain in place. Use the staffed front entrance while we repair it."



Which four words narrow what "access" means? Underline them.

Fictional case material

3

Booking confirmation emailed to Mateo, sent Tuesday 10:14 a.m.

Friday, 6—9 p.m. Screening confirmed. Front entrance: step-free. Staff member at the desk from 5:30 p.m.
Contact the coordinator for arrival support.



What does this confirm? What does it not say about the side door or about visitors who need other support?

Fictional case material

4

Jordy, holding message in the same chat

"We're checking the original. Hold your plans for a moment."



What does this message promise, and which word from the rumor does it avoid repeating?

Fictional case material

5

"My friend is already on the train. "We are figuring it out" does not tell her whether to keep coming."

Gia, 21, leaving for a café shift

What does this reader need first: a verdict, a time, a door or a contact?

Outside the story

The case is fictional. The questions in it are not. Here is where they show up in the real world.

Still missing

Whether every visitor can use the staffed front entrance (the email says step-free, not that every arrival need is covered), who first cropped the clip and why, and how many people already changed their plans.

Real-world evidence



Real source

Society of Professional Journalists, SPJ Code of Ethics

Summary, not a quotation: the code asks journalists to take responsibility for the accuracy of their work, verify information before releasing it and avoid distorting facts or context, including visual information.



video

Check Yourself with Lateral Reading: Crash Course Navigating Digital Information #3

[CrashCourse \(YouTube\)](#), 2019-01-22

Shows the move the crew makes: leave the screenshot, open new tabs and check who made it and what other sources say.



article

Viral image shows fake story from The Atlantic about Biden

[PolitiFact](#), 2022-08-01

A real fact-check of a fabricated news screenshot: the image looked official, but the outlet never published it.

Discuss before deciding

- Which item did you trust first, and why?
- What would you need to see before repeating the strongest claim?
- Who is missing from these documents?

What the evidence can hold up

Draw an arrow from each piece of evidence to the claim it supports or challenges. Which claim is left standing, and which gap still needs a check before you post?

Evidence	Claim 1 The screening is cancelled.	Claim 2 The screening is on; use the staffed front entrance.
1 The clip: “we are removing access...” ends mid-sentence.	Supports	—
2 The transcript: access is removed “through that reader,” and existing bookings remain in place. Also narrows evidence 1	Challenges	—
3 The booking email: Friday 6—9 p.m., screening confirmed, step-free front entrance.	Challenges	Supports

Still open

- Can every visitor use the temporary entrance?

Words that do the work

Claim

Afirmación

Something a person says is true. It still needs checking before you repeat it.

The screenshot says “They’re removing access tonight. Screening cancelled?” It is a claim with a question mark, not a confirmed fact.

Context

Contexto

The information around a quote or clip that changes what it means.

The clip stops right before “through that reader tonight,” the words that narrow “access” to one broken side door.

Primary source

Fuente primaria

The original record of what was said or done, not someone’s retelling of it.

The coordinator’s full meeting transcript and Mateo’s booking email are the originals the crew checks.

One student's draft

Write a holding statement and a follow-up correction for the same chat, twenty minutes apart.
Add a two-sentence rationale.

Message 1 (5:05 p.m.): Hey everyone, we saw the clip about the Common Room. We're checking the full meeting update right now, so please don't cancel your plans yet. We'll post again by 5:25 with a real answer. ¹ Message 2 (5:25 p.m.): Update: the screening is NOT cancelled ³. It's still Friday 6—9 p.m. The clip cut off the part where the coordinator said they're removing access "through that reader," meaning the broken side door ². Use the front entrance instead. It's staffed from 5:30 and it's step-free. I think whoever posted it was trying to start drama. ⁴

Rationale: I didn't repeat the word "cancelled" in my first message because people might only read that one word. I gave a time for the next update so people know when to check back.

- ¹ Strong holding move: a specific time tells people already traveling when to look again.
- ² Precise evidence. Quoting the exact words the clip removed shows readers why the clip misled them.
- ³ A clear verdict, but naming the booking email or the transcript here would let readers check it for themselves.
- ⁴ Revise: nothing in the sources tells us why the clip was shared. A guess about motive weakens the correction and can start a new argument.

Works well Uses evidence Gap to fix Think about the reader

One revision

Before

I think whoever posted it was trying to start drama.

After

I checked the coordinator's full transcript and Mateo's booking email. Need help getting in? Message the coordinator before you leave.

The revision swaps an unsupported guess for a named source and a contact, which gives readers something to verify and something to do.

Teacher commentary

This response handles the holding statement well and uses the transcript precisely, and the rationale explains a real word choice. The correction slips by adding a motive and never naming its source or a contact for arrival help. One targeted revision moves it from Developing to Proficient on the Evidence and Audience rows.

Teach it in one period

Grades 6—8

Talk it through, then write a three-sentence group-chat update telling friends whether to come on Friday and which door to use.

Sources

The screenshot and the booking email only, with the transcript read aloud by the teacher.

Product

Group-chat message, 3—4 sentences

Objective

Students separate a shared claim from what the original sources confirm and turn that difference into a short update friends can act on.

Assessed by

The teacher checks the update against the four success criteria and listens during partner talk for one piece of named evidence.

45 minutes	You	Students	Check for
5 min Hook: the post only	Project evidence A alone. Ask: what would you do if this landed in your chat right now?	Write privately: what happened, and what am I assuming?	Each student has one observation and one assumption written separately.
8 min Question the clip	Introduce Lupa’s question: where is the original? Model turning a reaction into a checkable question.	Pairs write one question that could change their view.	Questions are answerable with a document, not a vote on the poster.
12 min Open the receipts	Hand out the transcript and booking email on separate pages. Read the transcript aloud.	Highlight the words that narrow “access.” Place each document beside the claim it supports.	Pairs point to “through that reader” and “Existing room bookings remain in place.”
10 min Choose the message	Walk through decision 1: cancel now, holding message, or “it’s fake.” Ask what each makes a reader do.	Vote, then defend the choice with one line of evidence.	Students explain why “fake” overstates: the clip is real, the context is missing.
7 min Draft the update	Give the frame: “The post claims __. The original says __. We still need __.”	Write a 40—70 word group-chat update.	Draft names the screening time, the entrance change and a contact.
3 min Exit ticket	Ask for one detail that changed their mind.	Write the exact words that changed their interpretation.	Quotes a phrase from the transcript or email, not the screenshot.

Questions to keep asking



Lupa

The clip ends one sentence early. “Through that reader” is the evidence the screenshot cut.

Support every student, then assess

Success looks like

- ✓ States that the screening is still on, with the time
- ✓ Names the front entrance change
- ✓ Points to the email or transcript as proof
- ✓ Does not call anyone a liar

Supports at this level

- Frame: “The post says ___. The email says ___. So ___.”
- Teacher reads the transcript aloud twice
- Word bank: claim, original, entrance, confirmed
- Partner talk before any writing

Access

- Give the three documents on separate half-pages with the key sentence enlarged
- Read the transcript aloud and provide a recorded version for replay
- Spanish glossary: afirmación, contexto, fuente, entrada
- Students with IEPs or 504 plans may dictate the update or build it from sentence strips
- Reduce the load to the screenshot and booking email only

Stretch

- Map how the rumor would travel through three different chats and who would miss the correction
 - Write a one-paragraph policy for how the Common Room posts urgent updates
- Challenge:** Add one question the crew still can’t answer, like whether everyone can use the front entrance.

Rubric	Beginning	Developing	Proficient	Advanced
Evidence	Repeats the screenshot’s claim or ignores the documents.	Mentions a source but not the detail that changes the meaning.	Uses the transcript or email to correct the claim accurately.	Uses both documents and names what they still cannot confirm.
Reasoning	Treats the clip as fake or as final.	Corrects the claim but adds a guess about motive.	Explains the difference between an entrance change and a cancellation.	Explains how the crop produced the wrong conclusion and avoids inventing motive.
Audience & purpose	Message would not help someone decide whether to leave.	Gives the verdict but leaves out time or entrance.	Gives time, entrance and a contact.	Anticipates access needs and people who saw only the original post.
Revision	No change after feedback.	Surface edits only.	Adds a missing fact or removes an unsupported claim.	Explains why each edit makes the update more usable.

Standards this can show

RI.7.8 Common Core 6—8

RI.8.9 Common Core 6—8

SL.8.2 Common Core 6—8

D1.5.6-8 C3 Framework

D3.1.6-8 C3 Framework

D3.1.9-12 C3 Framework



Case 2

Same test. More questions

Does this task show what someone knows?

A single score can follow a student into placement, support and how teachers see them. Knowing what the law requires before a school decides a student needs special education helps students ask for support without diagnosing each other.

In the real world

Education Week, 2025 Does Extended Time on Tests Actually Help Students With ADHD?

K-12 Dive, 2025 IDEA at 50: How the landmark law changed education

Dec

I can trace the circuit. The six paragraphs are what lose me. Ask me before you tell the teacher what I need.

You'll make

Annotated sketch plus 3—5 sentence explanation

Time

About 45 minutes

Level

Grades 6—8



The case file

Look at what's actually here before deciding what it means.

Fictional case material

1

§ Circuit practice brief, handed out Monday, period 4

Goal: Explain how a simple circuit works. Read the six paragraphs below before you answer. Use the diagram to trace the path of the current from the battery through the switch and the LED and back. Answer questions 1–4 in complete sentences. (One small diagram sits below six dense paragraphs. No time limit or speed target is listed.)



Which skill does the goal line name, and which skills does the page demand that the goal line leaves out?

Fictional case material

2

Out loud, with the larger sketch: traced the whole path, battery to switch to LED and back. Correct. Written sheet: skipped a line in the instructions and answered a different question from the one asked. Dec: the layout is hard to follow.

Dec's study-table notes, Wednesday 3:40 p.m.



What did Dec get right out loud that the sheet didn't record? What do these notes not tell you?

Fictional case material

3

"I can show you where the current goes. Then I get halfway through the written question and lose my place."

Dec, 17, theatre crew



Is Dec describing the content, the format or both?

Fictional case material

4

"I kept saying "it is right there." That was not helping. I was looking at the answer, not how the question was written."

Anika, 16, studying with Dec



What did Anika change her mind about, and what evidence changed it?

Outside the story

The case is fictional. The questions in it are not. Here is where they show up in the real world.

Still missing

Whether Dec wants formal support at all, how the sheet is scored, whether other students lose their place in the same layout, and what the teacher meant the six paragraphs to test.

Real-world evidence



Real source

IDEA regulations, 34 CFR § 300.304 (evaluation procedures)

Summary, not a quotation: when a public agency conducts an IDEA evaluation, it must use a variety of assessment tools and strategies and may not use any single measure or assessment as the sole basis for deciding whether a child has a disability or what educational program is appropriate.



Real source

CAST, Universal Design for Learning Guidelines

Summary, not a quotation: the UDL Guidelines are design guidance that encourages offering learners more than one way to engage with learning, to take in information and to express what they know.



article

Does Extended Time on Tests Actually Help Students With ADHD?

[Education Week, 2025-10-13](#)

Asks the case's question in real life: does a test accommodation help students show what they actually know?

Discuss before deciding

- Which item did you trust first, and why?
- What would you need to see before repeating the strongest claim?
- Who is missing from these documents?

Who actually gets to decide?

Sort who can decide each question. Which decision belongs to the teacher, which to a formal school process, and which only to Dec?

Try a clearer practice format for the circuit goal

Who decides

The teacher, who sets the practice format and the learning goal

Under which rule

Who lives with it

Dec, who decides what to share and whether to ask

Your way in

Start a formal IDEA evaluation or a Section 504 conversation

Who decides

The school's evaluation process, with a parent or guardian for a student under 18

Under which rule

IDEA evaluation rule: varied tools, no single measure as the sole basis

Who lives with it

Your way in

A counselor or special-education coordinator explains how a request starts

Words that do the work

Learning goal

Meta de aprendizaje

The knowledge or skill a task is meant to show.

The practice brief says the goal is explaining how a simple circuit works. Speed is not listed.

IDEA

Ley IDEA

A federal law requiring public schools to provide eligible students with disabilities a free appropriate public education.

The crew reads IDEA's evaluation rule: one measure cannot be the only basis for deciding eligibility.

Evaluation

Evaluación

A formal process that gathers varied information to decide if a student has a disability and needs services.

Dec's practice sheet is not an evaluation. It is one observation the crew can describe to a teacher.

One student's draft

Draft a message to the teacher in Dec's voice, written with his permission, that describes the observations and asks about support options. Add a two-sentence note on what you left out and why.

Hi Ms. R, I'm working on the circuit practice sheet. The goal says we should explain how a simple circuit works. ¹ At the study table I traced the whole circuit out loud with a bigger diagram, but on the written sheet I skipped a line and answered a different question. ² I think I might have ADHD or something. ³ Could we talk about how the sheet checks the goal and whether there are other ways I could show it? I can bring both tries. Thanks, Dec Note: I left out my old grades and anything about my friends' support plans because that's private. I also didn't say the test was unfair, because we don't actually know that ⁴.

- 1** Strong opening. Leading with the learning goal frames the request around what the sheet is meant to measure, not the score.
- 2** Two precise, neutral observations taken from the study-table notes. This is the evidence a teacher can act on.
- 3** Revise: the notes cannot establish a diagnosis, and naming one in an email shares health information Dec may not want shared. Describe what happened instead.
- 4** Good reasoning in the note: the writer separates what the evidence shows from a conclusion it cannot support.

Works well Uses evidence Gap to fix Think about the reader

One revision

Before

I think I might have ADHD or something.

After

The layout with six long paragraphs is where I lose my place.

The revision keeps the message about the task's format, which the evidence supports, and leaves any formal evaluation to the school's process and to Dec's own choice.

Teacher commentary

The message follows the checklist: a goal, two observations and a specific question, and the note shows real judgment about privacy. The single self-diagnosis line undercuts both accuracy and privacy. Replacing it with an observation about the layout moves the response to Proficient on Reasoning and Audience.

Teach it in one period

Grades 6—8

Redesign Dec’s practice sheet so it still checks circuit understanding, then explain your changes to a partner.

Sources
The practice brief and Dec’s study-table notes; the legal rule is summarized by the teacher.

Objective
Students separate a task’s learning goal from its format and redesign the format so the same goal is easier to show.

Product
Annotated sketch plus 3—5 sentence explanation

Assessed by
The teacher checks the sketch and explanation against the four success criteria and listens for the goal being restated during partner talk.

45 minutes	You	Students	Check for
5 min Meet the task	Read Dec’s situation aloud. Set the norm: nobody shares their own grades or support plans.	Name what the circuit activity is supposed to show.	Students state the goal without mentioning speed.
10 min Sort the observations	Hand out evidence A and B. Draw three columns on the board.	Sort details into observed / possible explanation / not established.	“Dec has a disability” lands in “not established.”
10 min Read the rule	Read the IDEA evaluation excerpt aloud. Explain evaluation, eligibility, IEP and 504 as separate steps.	Paraphrase the rule in one sentence and name one thing it does not require.	Paraphrase includes “more than one measure” and limits it to formal evaluation.
12 min Redesign and request	Model a request using Dec’s voice: goal, two observations, question.	Sketch a clearer practice sheet OR draft a 60—100 word message Dec could approve.	Draft includes a goal, two observations and a question, with no diagnosis.
5 min Peer check	Give the check: would Dec be comfortable with this being sent?	Swap drafts and mark any line that decides something for Dec.	Each pair removes or rewrites one presumptuous line.
3 min Exit	Post the frame: “This suggests ___. It does not prove ___.”	Complete the frame.	Response separates a format barrier from a disability label.

Before class

- Prepare the case documents, one set per pair:
- ✓ Circuit practice brief, handed out Monday, period 4
 - ✓ Dec’s study-table notes, Wednesday 3:40 p.m.
 - ✓ Dec, 17, theatre crew
 - ✓ Anika, 16, studying with Dec
- Every document is fictional case material, printable from the online field guide.

Questions to keep asking

- **Pauta**
IDEA’s varied-measures rule covers formal evaluations, not every classroom quiz.
- **Lupa**
Dec traced the circuit aloud. That’s a second observation the score doesn’t show.

Support every student, then assess

Success looks like

- ✓ States the learning goal
- ✓ Makes at least two format changes
- ✓ Explains why the goal stays the same
- ✓ Does not say what Dec's diagnosis is

Supports at this level

- Large printed diagram to mark up
- Frames: "The goal is __. I changed __ so that __."
- Vocabulary cards: goal, barrier, format
- Talk first, write second

Access

- Offer the enlarged diagram and a numbered version of the practice sheet
- Read legal text aloud with a plain-language paraphrase beside it
- Spanish vocabulary: evaluación, meta de aprendizaje, barrera
- Students may respond in writing instead of role-play
- Never ask students to disclose their own IEP or 504 status

Stretch

- Research how your state describes the timeline for an initial evaluation after a parent consents
 - Design a UDL version of a real quiz from another class
- Challenge:** Explain why your version still tests the same goal and isn't just easier.

Rubric	Beginning	Developing	Proficient	Advanced
Evidence	Mentions only the score.	Describes Dec's explanation vaguely.	Cites the goal and two specific observations.	Uses observations and notes what they cannot show.
Reasoning	Concludes Dec has a disability or the test is illegal.	Suggests easier content without linking to the goal.	Connects a possible format barrier to the learning goal.	Distinguishes classroom support from IDEA evaluation accurately.
Audience & purpose	Message speaks for Dec without his input.	Mentions Dec but ignores his voice.	Written in Dec's voice with his permission.	Respects Dec's control and gives the teacher a clear next step.
Revision	No change.	Removes one problem line.	Replaces the diagnosis with an observation.	Explains how each change protects Dec's privacy and agency.

Standards this can show

RI.6.1 Common Core 6—8

RI.8.8 Common Core 6—8

W.7.1 Common Core 6—8

D2.Civ.12.6-8 C3 Framework

D2.Civ.13.9-12 C3 Framework

D4.7.9-12 C3 Framework



Case 3

The apology is not the repair

What makes a correction more useful than “sorry”?

Clubs, schools and companies all post things that turn out to be wrong, and how they fix it decides who keeps trusting them. Students who can tell a real correction from a nice-sounding apology can hold groups, including their own, to a higher standard.

In the real world

NPR Public Editor, 2022 That was wrong

NPR, 2017 Dove Expresses 'Regret' For Racially Insensitive Ad

Anika

We were carrying chairs at 5:30. Don't tell me how sorry you feel. Tell people what actually happened.

You'll make

Four-sentence correction

Time

About 45 minutes

Level

Grades 6—8



The case file

Look at what's actually here before deciding what it means.

Fictional case material

1

The crew's published recap caption, Saturday 11:08 a.m.

"Great night, once the younger crowd finally got organized."



Which group does this caption ask readers to blame, and on what evidence?

Fictional case material

2

Jordy's setup log, Friday evening

5:40 p.m. Projector failure reported. 6:00 p.m. Attendees seated.
6:20 p.m. Replacement projector connected. Note: Anika and Dec helped carry chairs before doors opened.



What happened at 5:40 that the caption never mentions? Which entry challenges the caption most directly?

Fictional case material

3

Anika, 16, message to the crew

"We were helping you set up. Why are we the problem in this post?"



What fact does Anika add, and what is she asking the crew to change?

Fictional case material

4

Gia's first correction, drafted Saturday 2:15 p.m., not posted

"Sorry if this came across wrong. We love our younger neighbors and would never want anyone to feel excluded."



What fact does this correct? Who does the word "if" put the problem on?

Fictional case material

5

"My log says Anika and Dec were carrying chairs before doors opened. The caption turned them into the reason we started late."

Jordy, 20, kept Friday's setup log

What does Jordy's log add about Anika and Dec, and what should the crew not ask of Anika?

Outside the story

The case is fictional. The questions in it are not. Here is where they show up in the real world.

Still missing

What each attendee actually experienced, whether any latecomers affected the start at all, how far the recap was reshared, and whether Anika wants any public response.

Real-world evidence



Real source

Public Relations Society of America, PRSA Code of Ethics

Summary, not a quotation: the code names honesty among its core values and, in its provisions of conduct, expects members to correct promptly any erroneous communication they are responsible for.



article

That was wrong

[NPR Public Editor, 2022-10-21](#)

How a real newsroom corrects mistakes: name the error, fix it on the story and keep a public list.



article

Dove Expresses 'Regret' For Racially Insensitive Ad

[NPR, 2017-10-08](#)

A real brand apology after an ad played into a racial stereotype; compare the words with what changed afterward.

Discuss before deciding

- Which item did you trust first, and why?
- What would you need to see before repeating the strongest claim?
- Who is missing from these documents?

Same moment, different accounts

Place the four accounts side by side. Where do they agree, where do they split, and which one was written down at the time?

Account 1

Caption: the night went well once the younger crowd got organized.

Account 2

Event log: projector failed at 5:40; replacement connected at 6:20; Anika and Dec carried chairs.

Account 3

Anika: "We were helping you set up."

Where they agree

The screening started late.

Where they differ

What caused the delay: a group's behavior or an equipment failure?

Check: Which account was recorded at the time rather than remembered afterward?

Words that do the work

Communications plan

Plan de comunicación

A plan naming your goal, audiences, key message, channels and how you will check it worked.

Caio's question "Who needs the correction, and what should they understand afterward?" starts the plan.

Key message

Mensaje clave

The one idea every audience should walk away with.

The projector failed; younger attendees did not cause the delay.

Correction

Corrección

A clear replacement of inaccurate information, published where the error was seen.

Gia edits the original caption, not just her story, so people who saw it learn what was wrong.

One student's draft

Write a correction and a short repair plan with a named owner and a date to check it.

Correction: Our recap said the screening started late because the younger crowd wasn't organized. That was wrong, and we're sorry. ¹ Jordy's event log shows the projector failed at 5:40 p.m. ² and the new one wasn't connected until 6:20. Anika and Dec actually helped carry chairs before doors opened. Repair plan: Gia will edit the original caption today so the correction is where people saw the mistake. We will also ask Anika to post that she's okay with the correction so people know it's resolved. ³ Before we post any recap, Jordy will check claims about what caused a problem against the event log. We'll check on Friday whether the next recap went through that step. ⁴

- ¹ Good order: the correction names the error before it apologizes, so it does its main job first.
- ² Precise evidence with a time lets readers see why the caption's explanation doesn't hold.
- ³ Revise: this puts repair work on the person who was blamed. The crew can offer a private way to respond, but Anika shouldn't have to vouch in public.
- ⁴ Strong measure: it checks whether the promised process happened, not just whether the comments stopped.

Works well Uses evidence Gap to fix Think about the reader

One revision

Before

~~We will also ask Anika to post that she's okay with the correction so people know it's resolved.~~

After

We'll message the people the caption blamed to say it's corrected, and they can reply privately if we missed something.

The crew still reaches the people who were harmed, but the work of fixing the record stays with the crew.

Teacher commentary

The correction is accurate, leads with the error and cites the log with times. The repair plan names an owner, a process and a date, which many drafts miss. Asking Anika to vouch for the crew is the one line that shifts the burden onto the person harmed; fixing it moves the plan to Advanced on Audience.

Teach it in one period

Grades 6—8

Fix Gia’s apology using a four-line template, then read it aloud as Anika would hear it.

Sources

The caption, the event log and Gia’s first draft.

Objective

Students replace an unsupported explanation with what a record shows and tell the difference between saying sorry and correcting a claim.

Product

Four-sentence correction

Assessed by

The teacher checks the four-sentence correction against the success criteria and asks each pair which line Anika needed most.

45 minutes	You	Students	Check for
5 min Read the caption	Show the caption alone. Keep discussion on the fictional event.	Silently note the claim and the group it blames.	Students name “younger crowd” as the group blamed.
10 min Build the timeline	Hand out Jordy’s event log.	Build a timeline from 5:40 to 6:20 and mark which entry challenges the caption.	Timelines show the projector failure as the cause of delay.
8 min Examine the apology	Project Gia’s first draft. Ask: what does it correct?	Highlight words about intent in one color, facts in another.	Students find zero corrected facts in the draft.
15 min Write the plan	Introduce the plan parts: goal, audience, key message, channel, repair owner, measure.	Draft a 70—100 word correction plus one repair with an owner and a check.	Correction names the error, the evidence, the fix and who does what.
5 min Editorial desk	Assign roles: fact-checker, reach-checker, responsibility-checker.	Partners check one role each and suggest one edit.	Each draft receives one specific edit tied to a role.
2 min Exit	Frame: “Our next recap will change because __.”	Complete the frame.	Answer names a repeatable process, not a feeling.

Before class

Prepare the case documents, one set per pair:

- ✓ The crew’s published recap caption, Saturday 11:08 a.m.
- ✓ Jordy’s setup log, Friday evening
- ✓ Anika, 16, message to the crew
- ✓ Gia’s first correction, drafted Saturday 2:15 p.m., not posted

Every document is fictional case material, printable from the online field guide.

Questions to keep asking



Lupa
5:40 p.m. projector failure. The log answers the question the caption guessed at.



Onda
Anika helped set up and got blamed in public. That shapes whether she comes back.



Pauta
A wrong post isn’t automatically a legal problem. It’s still an ethical one to fix.

Support every student, then assess

Success looks like

- ✓ Names the wrong claim
- ✓ States what the log shows
- ✓ Names one change
- ✓ Leaves out how sorry Gia feels

Supports at this level

- Template: “We said __. The record shows __. We changed __. Next time __ will __.”
- Timeline already started
- Word bank: correction, cause, evidence, blame
- Pair reading

Access

- Pre-build the timeline with blanks for three times
- Read Anika’s message aloud in a neutral voice
- Spanish vocabulary: corrección, estereotipo, reparación
- Allow students to annotate a provided draft instead of writing from scratch
- Reduce the plan to three parts: fix, owner, check

Stretch

- Draft how the crew would measure whether younger neighbors come back
- Compare a real published correction policy from a newsroom with the crew’s plan

Challenge: Add one sentence that tells people who saw the original where the fix is posted.

Rubric	Beginning	Developing	Proficient	Advanced
Evidence	No evidence about the delay.	Mentions “technical issues” vaguely.	Cites the projector failure from the log.	Cites specific times and corrects who actually helped.
Reasoning	Apologizes for feelings only.	Admits error but not what it was.	Names the inaccurate claim and replaces it.	Explains why the claim harmed a group and how the repair prevents a repeat.
Audience & purpose	Does not consider who saw the post.	Speaks to readers in general.	Reaches the people who were blamed.	Reaches the original audience and the blamed group through appropriate channels.
Revision	No change.	Softens tone only.	Adds facts and a repair.	Adds facts, an owner, a check and removes shifting of blame.

Standards this can show

RI.7.6 Common Core 6—8

RI.8.8 Common Core 6—8

W.6.1 Common Core 6—8

D2.Civ.7.6-8 C3 Framework

D2.Civ.10.9-12 C3 Framework

D4.3.9-12 C3 Framework



Case 4

Whose room is it, anyway?

Who gets a say when a shared space changes?

Libraries, rec centers and after-school rooms change hours and fees all the time, and those changes land hardest on people with the least flexible schedules. Learning to read a budget and ask the right decision-maker lets students defend a shared space without pretending money doesn't matter.

In the real world

Education Week, 2023 Letting Students Decide Where Money Should Go: How One District Did It

First Alert 4 (KMOV), 2026 St. Louis shuts down streets to cars, hands them over to neighbors

Mari

Mira, “keep it free” doesn’t pay the person closing up, and I’m that person. So what’s our plan for the gap?

You'll make

People map plus a 4—6 sentence note

Time

About 45 minutes

Level

Grades 6—8



The case file

Look at what's actually here before deciding what it means.

Fictional case material

1

§ Nonprofit board agenda, board meeting Wednesday 6:30 p.m.

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.



Is this a vote or a discussion? Which words tell you?

Fictional case material

2

Illustrative weekly budget note prepared for the board (invented figures for practice)

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.



Which number here is a guess, and what could change it? Work out the gap with zero, one and two rentals.

Fictional case material

3

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.

Listening notes from evening users, collected over the weekend



Whose voice is missing from these four notes, and how could they contribute without attending?

Fictional case material

4

"If they take both late evenings, the room might still be "open" when I am working. That is not the same as being able to use it."

Mari, 19, bookseller who closes the shop



What is the difference between a room being open and a room being usable?

Fictional case material

5

"I want us to stop solving this for everybody before we ask everybody."

Sami, 23, uses the room after her print-shop shift

What would the crew have to do before its request could claim to speak for evening users?

Outside the story

The case is fictional. The questions in it are not. Here is where they show up in the real world.

Still missing

Who uses the room on other evenings, whether the \$120 projection rests on any past bookings, what the board will do if the pilot underperforms, and the views of evening users who were not in the listening notes.

Real-world evidence



Real source

Carol Bacchi, “What’s the problem represented to be?” approach

Summary, not a quotation: Bacchi’s policy-analysis approach asks how a proposed solution represents the problem it claims to solve and what that representation leaves unexamined.



article

Letting Students Decide Where Money Should Go: How One District Did It

[Education Week, 2023-02-06](#)

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



article

St. Louis shuts down streets to cars, hands them over to neighbors

[First Alert 4 \(KMOV\), 2026-06-04](#)

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

Discuss before deciding

- Which item did you trust first, and why?
- What would you need to see before repeating the strongest claim?
- Who is missing from these documents?

If this, then what?

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

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

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

Evening users, including people who cannot attend the meeting

Option C: one rental evening piloted for six weeks

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

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

Words that do the work

Trade-off

Ventajas y costos

A choice that helps one goal while limiting another.

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

Equity

Equidad

Giving people what they need to have a fair chance, which may not be the same thing for everyone.

The same evening slot means a different thing for Sami after a print-shop shift than for someone free all day.

Projection

Proyección

An estimate based on assumptions that may change.

Each rental is projected to add \$120, but demand is uncertain.

Authority

Autoridad

The power or responsibility to make a particular decision.

The nonprofit board decides, not a city community board and not the crew.

One student's draft

Prepare a 90-second public comment recommending an option, using at least one figure accurately.

Good evening. I use the Common Room on weeknights, and I'm here about the evening rental options. I think the board should choose Option C, the six-week pilot.¹ Option B would replace both Tuesday and Thursday free evenings, and Dec rehearses on Thursdays, so he would lose his spot². The budget note says each rental will add \$120, so the pilot will bring the gap down to \$80³. That still leaves a gap, but the board could ask local businesses to sponsor the room. Also, a lot of people who use the room are working during this meeting. Could the board accept written comments for two weeks so they can be heard too?⁴ Thank you.

- 1 A clear position on a specific option, stated early enough for a listener to follow.
- 2 Good use of the listening notes: an affected person tied to a specific evening.
- 3 Revise: the budget note calls \$120 a projection and says demand is uncertain. Say "is projected to" and "if bookings hold."
- 4 Strong request: the board can act on it, and it reaches people the meeting time leaves out.

Works well Uses evidence Gap to fix Think about the reader

One revision

Before

The budget note says each rental will add \$120, so the pilot will bring the gap down to \$80.

After

The budget note projects \$120 per rental, so if bookings hold, the pilot would bring the weekly gap down to about \$80.

The revision matches the source's own uncertainty, which makes the speaker more credible to a board that knows demand could fall short.

Teacher commentary

The comment is organized for listening: position, affected person, figure, request. Its one weakness is treating a projection as a promise, which a board member would catch at once. With the figure stated conditionally it reaches Proficient on Evidence, and naming the resident's noise concern would move it toward Advanced on Reasoning.

Teach it in one period

Grades 6—8

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.

Sources

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

Product

People map plus a 4—6 sentence note

Objective

Students identify who decides, read a simple budget gap and turn a people map into two questions a board can answer.

Assessed by

The teacher checks the map for at least one missing voice and the note against the four success criteria.

45 minutes	You	Students	Check for
5 min Name the decision	Read the agenda aloud. Ask: is this a final vote? Who decides?	Identify the decision-maker and the stage of the proposal.	Students say “nonprofit board, discussion only, no vote yet.”
10 min Work the numbers	Model $\$600 - \$400 = \$200$. Provide calculators.	Model zero, one and two rentals; underline “demand is uncertain.”	Correct figures: a \$200 gap, an \$80 gap with one rental, a \$40 surplus with two.
10 min People map	Draw the map: who uses the room, when, and who might miss the meeting.	Add Sami, Dec, Mari and the resident; add missing voices as questions.	Map includes at least one missing voice written as a question.
12 min Draft the comment	Share the four parts: position, effect, figure, request.	Write a 90-second comment or 120—160 word letter.	Comment uses one figure accurately and asks for something the board can do.
6 min Board test	Partners play board members.	Ask one good-faith question; the speaker revises one line.	Each comment shows one revision made in response.
2 min Exit	Ask for a person affected who may miss the meeting.	Name them and one alternate way to contribute.	Answer names a real route, like a written comment.

Before class

- Prepare the case documents, one set per pair:
- ✓ Nonprofit board agenda, board meeting Wednesday 6:30 p.m.
 - ✓ Illustrative weekly budget note prepared for the board (invented figures for practice)
 - ✓ Listening notes from evening users, collected over the weekend
 - ✓ Mari, 19, bookseller who closes the shop

Questions to keep asking

- 

Nexo

This is a nonprofit board, not a city community board. Different bodies, different rules.
- 

Lupa

$\$600 - \$400 = \$200$. One rental leaves \$80, if the projection holds.

Support every student, then assess

Success looks like

- ✓ Names the nonprofit board as the decision-maker
- ✓ Asks one budget question
- ✓ Asks one access question
- ✓ Treats the agenda as a proposal, not a final decision

Supports at this level

- Calculator and worked example
- People-map organizer
- Frames: “I use the room when __. Could the board explain __?”
- Written comment instead of speaking

Access

- Provide a calculator and a worked \$600 – \$400 example
- Read one option at a time aloud
- Spanish vocabulary: propuesta, proyección, autoridad, equidad
- Offer a written comment instead of public speaking
- Pre-fill two people on the people map

Stretch

- Model what happens if only four of six pilot rentals are booked
- Research the difference between a nonprofit board and a public community board in your area

Challenge: Add a question about someone not in the listening notes.

Rubric	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.	Weights 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.

Standards this can show

RI.6.7 Common Core 6–8

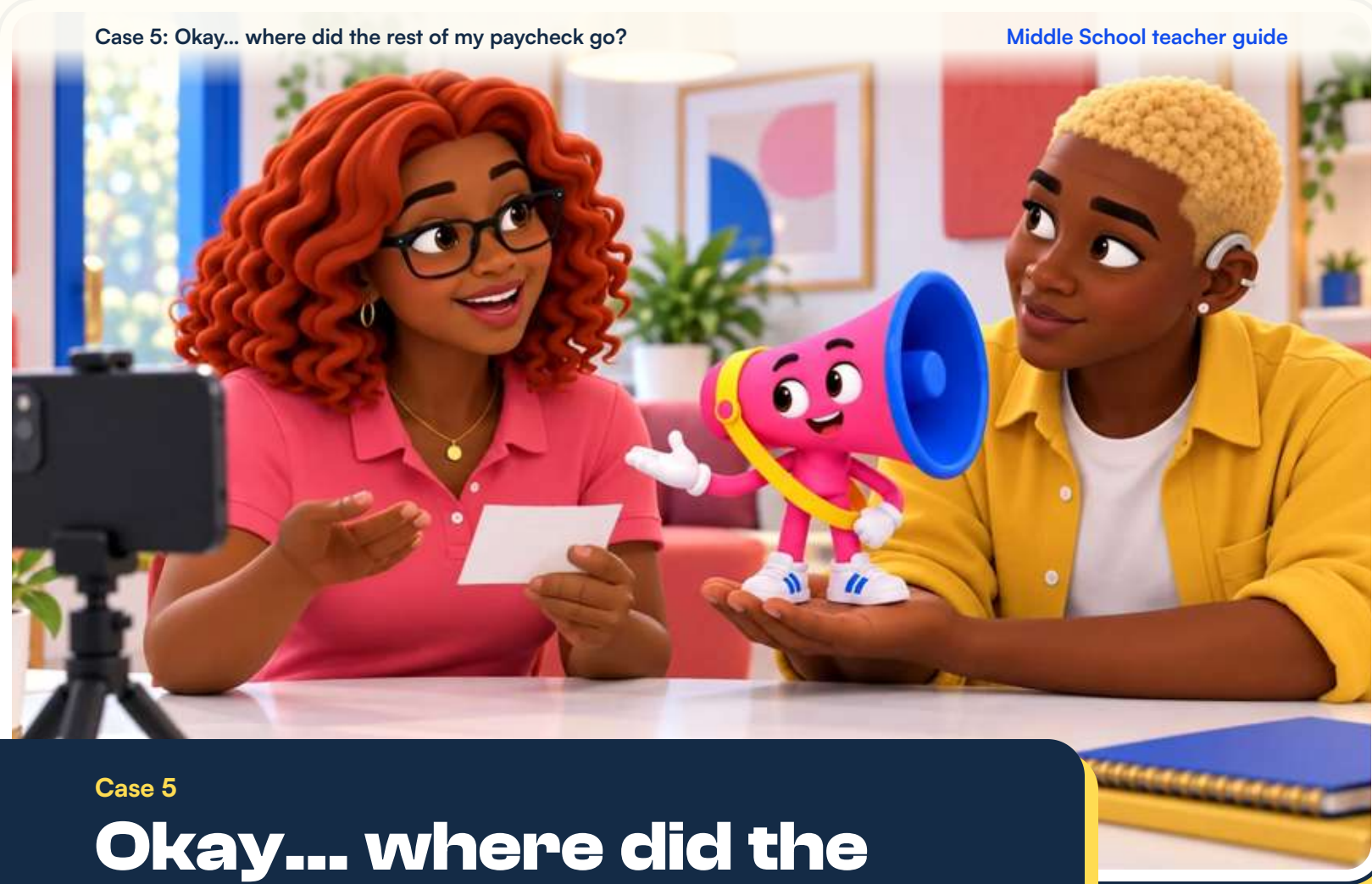
W.8.1 Common Core 6–8

SL.7.4 Common Core 6–8

D2.Civ.6.6-8 C3 Framework

D2.Civ.13.9-12 C3 Framework

D2.Civ.9.9-12 C3 Framework



Case 5

Okay... where did the rest of my paycheck go?

Why is my deposit smaller than what I earned?

Many students start working in high school, and a pay statement is often the first place they meet labor law and the social safety net. Reading each line lets a worker spot a real error and understand what their Social Security and Medicare contributions are for.

Gia

I counted my hours twice. Okay, the Saturday shift was after the cutoff. One more question: what's this withholding line?

In the real world

Two Cents / PBS (YouTube), 2019 How Do Your Tax Dollars Get Spent?

NPR, The Indicator from Planet Money, 2018 Social Insecurity

You'll make

Labeled statement plus 3—4 sentence explanation

Time

About 45 minutes

Level

Grades 6—8



The case file

Look at what's actually here before deciding what it means.

Fictional case material

1

Illustrative pay statement, pay period ending Friday the 12th, paid the following Thursday

Hours: 15.00 at \$17.00. Gross pay: \$255.00. Social Security tax: \$15.81. Medicare tax: \$3.70. Federal income tax withheld: \$8.40. State and local income tax withheld: \$6.10. Net pay: \$220.99. (Invented withholding amounts for practice; they do not predict anyone's taxes.)



Which line shows what Gia earned before deductions? Which two lines together make up FICA?

Fictional case material

2

Gia's shift log in her notes app, last two weeks

Mon the 8th: 4 hrs. Wed the 10th: 4 hrs. Thu the 11th: 3 hrs. Fri the 12th: 4 hrs. Sat the 13th: 3 hrs. My total: 18 hrs.



Which shift falls outside the pay period? Add up the hours that fall inside it.

Fictional case material

3

Gia and Jordy comparing deposits, Thursday 7:20 p.m.

Gia: my deposit is way less than what I worked out??

Jordy: Mine looks different too. But comparing just our deposits is going to send us in circles.

Jordy: Please don't post the whole statement. Just tell me which line.



Why doesn't comparing deposits answer Gia's question? What would they need to compare instead?

Fictional case material

4

"Just did. The period ended Friday the 12th. My Saturday shift was the 13th. So it's probably on the next statement. Probably. I still want payroll to confirm."

Gia, 21, café worker



What does Gia decide to check before making a claim about an error?

Outside the story

The case is fictional. The questions in it are not. Here is where they show up in the real world.

Still missing

Whether the Saturday shift will appear on the next statement, what Gia entered on her W-4, whether any other deductions such as benefits apply to her job, and the minimum wage where she works.

Real-world evidence



Real source

Internal Revenue Service, Understanding employment taxes

Summary, not a quotation: the IRS explains that employers generally withhold federal income tax and the employee's share of Social Security and Medicare taxes from wages, and that federal income-tax withholding is figured partly from the employee's Form W-4.



Real source

Internal Revenue Service, Understanding Taxes tutorial on gross and net pay

Summary, not a quotation: the tutorial defines gross pay as earnings before deductions and net pay as what remains after deductions, the amount often called take-home pay.



video

How Do Your Tax Dollars Get Spent?

[Two Cents / PBS \(YouTube\), 2019-04-10](#)

Starts with a first paycheck that's smaller than expected and explains FICA and income tax withholding.

Discuss before deciding

- Which item did you trust first, and why?
- What would you need to see before repeating the strongest claim?
- Who is missing from these documents?

What the evidence can hold up

Before calling it an error, sort the evidence. Which facts explain the smaller deposit, and which question is still worth asking payroll?

Evidence	Claim 1 Payroll shorted Gia's pay.	Claim 2 The missing 3 hours belong on the next statement.
1 Shift log shows 18 hours; the statement shows 15	Supports	—
2 The period ended Friday the 12th; the 3-hour shift was Saturday the 13th	Challenges	Supports
3 Gross pay of \$255.00 matches 15 × \$17.00	Challenges	—
4 FICA and withholding lines account for the gap between gross and net	Challenges	—

Still open

- Will the Saturday shift actually appear next time? Ask payroll.

Words that do the work

Gross pay

Salario bruto

What you earned before anything is taken out: hours times rate, plus other earnings.

Gia's statement shows 15 hours at \$17.00, or \$255.00 gross in this illustrative example.

Net pay

Salario neto

What actually reaches you after deductions.

The bank deposit Gia checked twice is her net pay, not her earnings.

FICA

FICA (Seguro Social y Medicare)

Payroll taxes for Social Security and Medicare, federal programs for retirement, disability, survivors and health care.

Rachel names FICA in Friends. On Gia's statement it shows up as two lines.

One student's draft

Write Gia's payroll question and a short explainer for a friend starting their first job.

Payroll message: Hi, I'm checking my statement for the pay period that ended Friday the 12th. My shift log shows 18 hours, but the statement shows 15. ¹ Was my Saturday shift on the 13th after the cutoff? ² If so, will it be on my next check? Thanks, Gia

Explainer for Jordy: Your deposit is net pay, which is what's left after deductions. Gross pay is your hours times your rate. FICA is the tax for Social Security and Medicare, and income-tax withholding is basically the same thing, just another name for it ³. So before you think payroll messed up, match the dates first and then read each line ⁴.

- 1** Precise evidence from both records: the exact comparison payroll can check.
- 2** Good reasoning: the writer tests the pay-period explanation before assuming an error.
- 3** Revise: federal income-tax withholding is a separate line from FICA, and its amount depends partly on the W-4.
- 4** Useful, sequenced advice a new worker can actually follow.

Works well Uses evidence Gap to fix Think about the reader

One revision

Before

~~FICA is the tax for Social Security and Medicare, and income-tax withholding is basically the same thing, just another name for it.~~

After

FICA is the tax for Social Security and Medicare. Federal income-tax withholding is a separate line, and the amount depends partly on the W-4 you filled out.

The revision fixes a factual error that would confuse a first-time worker looking at two different lines on the same statement.

Teacher commentary

The payroll message is excellent: it names the period, both hour counts and a specific question, and keeps private details out. The explainer is clear and well sequenced but merges FICA with income-tax withholding. Correcting that sentence moves the response to Proficient on Evidence and Reasoning.

Teach it in one period

Grades 6—8

Label a practice pay statement and explain to a partner where the money went.

Sources

The illustrative pay statement and a one-paragraph explanation of FICA.

Objective

Students read a pay statement from gross to net and explain in their own words what FICA pays for.

Product

Labeled statement plus 3—4 sentence explanation

Assessed by

The teacher checks the labels and the 15 × \$17.00 calculation and listens for FICA being named as Social Security and Medicare.

45 minutes	You	Students	Check for
5 min The deposit	Show Gia’s bank deposit and her notes: 18 hours worked.	Predict: why might the deposit be smaller?	Predictions include taxes and at least one non-tax reason.
10 min Read the statement	Hand out the illustrative pay statement. Define gross, net, FICA and withholding.	Label each line and calculate 15 × \$17.00.	Students get \$255.00 gross and find the FICA lines.
8 min Find the three hours	Show the pay-period dates and Gia’s shift log.	Compare dates and explain the missing hours.	Students find the Saturday shift after the cutoff.
10 min Why FICA?	Explain Social Security and Medicare as social insurance and the federal minimum wage vs. local rates.	Write one sentence on what FICA pays for and one question about the local minimum.	Sentences name retirement, disability or health care accurately.
9 min Write the payroll question	Model a line-specific question.	Draft a private message to payroll about any unexplained line.	Message names a period, a line and a document.
3 min Exit	Ask: what would you check before saying payroll made a mistake?	Write two things.	Answers include pay period and hours/rate.

Before class

Prepare the case documents, one set per pair:

- ✓ Illustrative pay statement, pay period ending Friday the 12th, paid the following Thursday
- ✓ Gia’s shift log in her notes app, last two weeks
- ✓ Gia and Jordy comparing deposits, Thursday 7:20 p.m.
- ✓ Gia, 21, café worker

Every document is fictional case material, printable from the online field guide.

Questions to keep asking



Lupa
Her log says 18 hours; the statement says 15. Check the pay-period dates first.



Pauta
FICA funds Social Security and Medicare. It’s a separate line from income-tax withholding.



Onda
Those FICA dollars pay for today’s retirees and people with disabilities, and Gia’s future benefits.

Support every student, then assess

Success looks like

- ✓ Correctly identifies gross and net
- ✓ Names FICA as Social Security and Medicare
- ✓ Explains one deduction in own words
- ✓ No real pay information used

Supports at this level

- Color-coded statement: earnings green, deductions orange
- Calculator
- Frames: “Gross pay is __. After __, net pay is __.”
- Vocabulary cards with pictures

Access

- Provide a color-coded statement and calculator
- Read each line aloud and model the first calculation
- Spanish vocabulary: salario bruto, salario neto, retención, período de pago
- Reduce to three lines: gross, FICA, net
- Students with IEPs may use a partially completed table

Stretch

- Use the IRS Tax Withholding Estimator’s public page to list what information it asks for (no personal data)
- Research your state’s minimum wage and pay-statement requirements

Challenge: Find the shift that belongs to the next pay period.

Rubric	Beginning	Developing	Proficient	Advanced
Evidence	No specific numbers.	Mentions hours but no period.	Names hours, period and the line in question.	Cites own records and the statement side by side.
Reasoning	Assumes an error or theft.	Assumes all difference is tax.	Separates hours, deductions and period timing.	Explains which differences are expected and which need checking.
Audience & purpose	Shares private details or demands.	Polite but vague.	Clear question payroll can answer.	Clear, private, and offers the right document.
Revision	No change.	Removes one issue.	Adds period and line, removes private data.	Explains why each change helps payroll respond.

Standards this can show

RI.6.7 Common Core 6—8

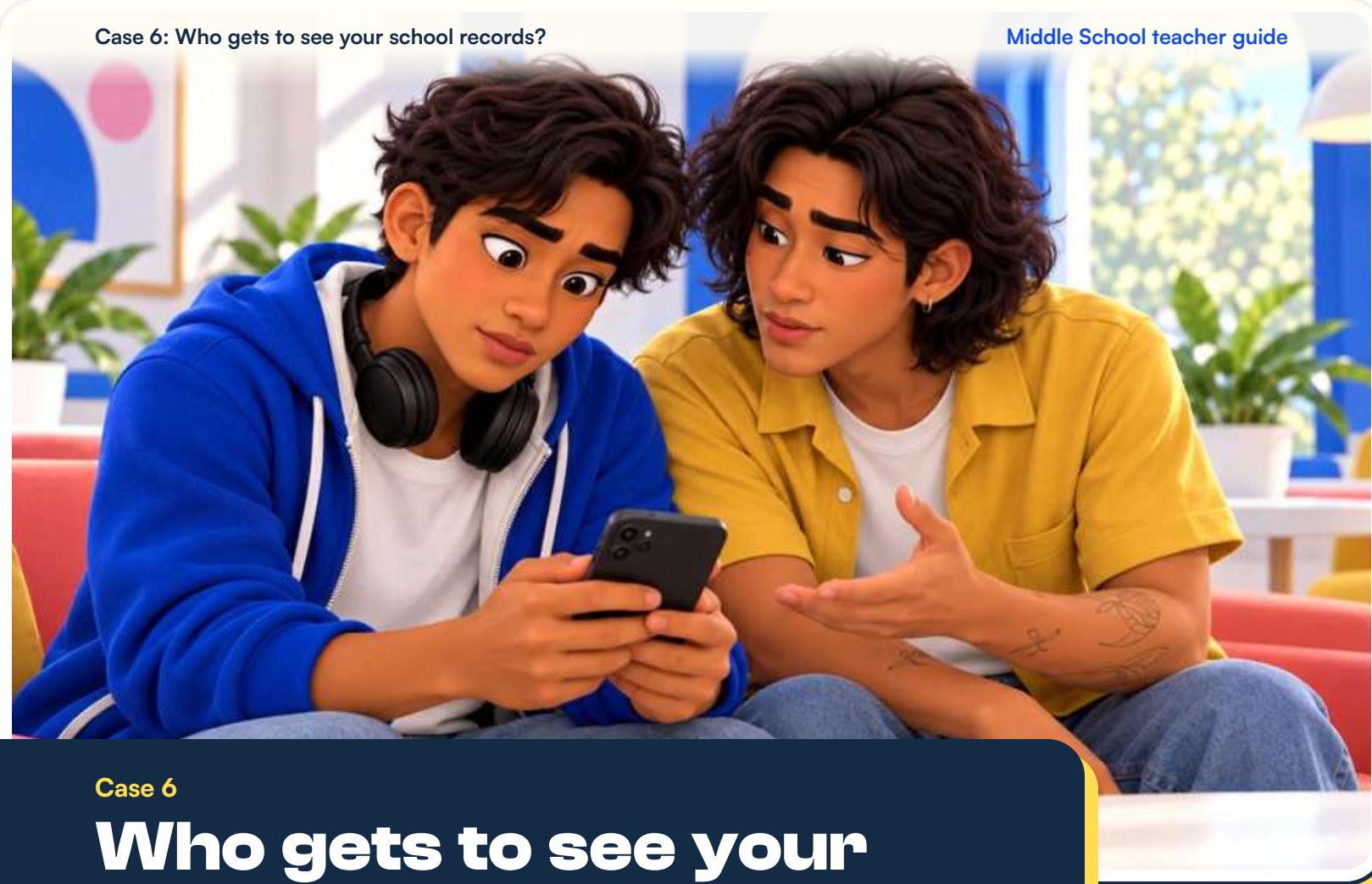
RH.6-8.7 Common Core 6—8

W.7.2 Common Core 6—8

D2.Civ.13.6-8 C3 Framework

D2.Civ.13.9-12 C3 Framework

D2.Civ.12.9-12 C3 Framework



Case 6

Who gets to see your school records?

If your family helps pay for school, what are they allowed to see?

Grades, schedules and discipline records follow students for years, and the rules about who can see them change at 18 or when a student starts college. Knowing which record, which permission and which office to ask keeps family support from turning into giving away every login.

In the real world

U.S. Department of Education (YouTube), 2013 Student Privacy 101: FERPA for Parents and Students

U.S. Department of Education, Student Privacy Policy Office Must postsecondary institutions provide a parent with access to an eligible student's education records?

Rafa

Sige, they can help with the bill. I just want to read what I'm signing before I hand over my grades too.

You'll make

Illustrated card, 4—6 sentences

Time

About 45 minutes

Level

Grades 6—8



The case file

Look at what's actually here before deciding what it means.

Fictional case material

1

§ Parent and family access authorization form mailed to Rafa, August 28 (illustrative)

Section 1, Billing and payments: allow the person named below to view account statements and make payments. Yes / No. Section 2, Academic records: allow the person named below to receive information about grades, enrollment and academic standing. Yes / No. Section 3: this authorization stays in effect until the student changes or withdraws it in writing.



Which section covers billing and which covers grades? What happens if Rafa signs only Section 1?

Fictional case material

2

College annual FERPA notice posted on the registrar's page, fall term (illustrative)

Students have the right to inspect their education records, to request corrections and to consent to disclosures, except where the law allows disclosure without consent. Questions go to the Office of the Registrar.



Who does this notice say holds the rights now? Which phrase tells you exceptions exist?

Fictional case material

3

Rafa's family group chat, Sunday 8:47 p.m.

Mom: Did the tuition form come? We want to help with the bill.

Dad: Send us the login and we'll take care of everything.

Rafa: Sige, the bill part I can share. Let me read the rest first.



What is his family actually asking for help with, and how is "everything" different from the bill?

Fictional case material

4

"Then we need the actual exception and the actual facts. "Privacy law" is not a magic sentence that answers every request."

Caio, 24, helping Rafa read the request



Why is "privacy law" not enough of an answer on its own?

Outside the story

The case is fictional. The questions in it are not. Here is where they show up in the real world.

Still missing

Which form and exceptions Rafa's own college uses, whether his family claims him as a tax dependent, exactly what help his family wants, and how the college lets a student change an authorization.

Real-world evidence



Real source

U.S. Department of Education, Student Privacy Policy Office, FAQ "What is FERPA?"

Summary, not a quotation: FERPA gives parents certain rights over their children's education records, and those rights transfer to the student at age 18 or when the student attends a school beyond the high school level. A student who holds the rights is called an eligible student.



Real source

American University, parent-access guide (AU Central)

Summary, not a quotation: the guide separates parent online access for student-account activity and bill payment from authorization to discuss academic records, and says parent billing access does not include viewing grades.



video

Student Privacy 101: FERPA for Parents and Students

[U.S. Department of Education \(YouTube\), 2013-11-07](#)

The Education Department's own short explainer of FERPA rights and when they move from parents to students.

Discuss before deciding

- Which item did you trust first, and why?
- What would you need to see before repeating the strongest claim?
- Who is missing from these documents?

Who actually gets to decide?

Who actually decides each question: Rafa, the rule or the college? Mark where paying the bill and seeing grades split into two separate decisions.

Who may see Rafa’s grades?	Who may see and pay the tuition bill?
Who decides Rafa, the eligible student, through written consent	Who decides Rafa, the eligible student, through written consent
Under which rule FERPA: rights transfer to the student at 18 or on entering college	Under which rule
Who lives with it Rafa’s family, who help pay tuition	Who lives with it Rafa’s family, who help pay tuition
Your way in The registrar or records office explains which form and which exceptions apply	Your way in

Words that do the work

FERPA
Ley FERPA
A federal law giving parents, and later students, rights over education records at schools that receive U.S. Department of Education funds.

Rafa is 18 and in college, so under the general rule the FERPA rights are his, not his parents’.

Education record
Expediente educativo
A record directly about a student that the school, or someone acting for it, keeps.

Rafa’s grades and schedule count. His family’s tuition payment portal is a separate access route.

Transfer of rights
Transferencia de derechos
FERPA rights move from parents to the student at 18 or when the student enters college, whichever comes first.

A student who starts college at 17 would also hold the rights. Rafa’s family helping pay doesn’t move them back.

One student's draft

Write Rafa a one-page guide separating paying the bill from seeing grades.

Paying vs. Seeing: A Guide for Rafa Since you're 18 and in college, the FERPA rights to your education records belong to you now, not your parents. The Department of Education FAQ says rights transfer at 18 or when you start college¹. Paying tuition is a different thing from seeing your grades. In the university guide, parent access for the bill does not include viewing grades², so that needs a separate authorization. So your parents can never see your grades unless you say yes.³ Before you sign anything, ask the records office three questions: which record would be shared, who would get it, and how you can change your mind later⁴. Talk with your family first about what help you actually want.

- 1 Accurate statement of the transfer rule, attributed to the right source.
- 2 Precise use of the university guide, and the writer correctly presents it as one school's process.
- 3 Revise: this overstates the rule. FERPA has exceptions, including one for parents who claim a student as a tax dependent. Say that exceptions exist and send Rafa to the records office.
- 4 Strong next step: specific, answerable questions for the office that actually holds the records.

Works well Uses evidence Gap to fix Think about the reader

One revision

Before

~~So your parents can never see your grades unless you say yes.~~

After

Usually your family would need your permission to see grades, but the law has exceptions, so ask the records office which ones your college uses.

The revision keeps the main rule clear while being honest that exceptions exist, which is what the success criteria ask for.

Teacher commentary

The guide gets the transfer rule right, separates billing from grades and ends with a useful set of questions. The one absolute claim, “never,” is the kind of overstatement that can mislead a student in a real situation. Qualifying it moves the guide from Developing to Proficient on Reasoning.

Teach it in one period

Grades 6—8

Make a “my records, my family” card explaining who holds FERPA rights for a middle-school student and what changes at 18.

Sources

The FERPA FAQ summary read aloud and the case quiz.

Objective

Students explain who holds FERPA rights at different ages and write a question for the office that keeps their records.

Product

Illustrated card, 4—6 sentences

Assessed by

The teacher checks the card for an accurate transfer rule, a real question for the office and no personal information.

45 minutes	You	Students	Check for
5 min Open the envelope (not literally)	Read the conversation where Rafa hasn’t opened the envelope. Set the norm: no one shares real records.	Write: what does Rafa want his family to help with?	Answers name a specific task, not “everything.”
10 min Read the rule	Read the FERPA FAQ lines on rights and transfer aloud.	Answer the case quiz: a student starts college at 17—who holds the rights?	Students answer “the student” and cite why.
10 min Separate the routes	Hand out the parent-access guide excerpt.	Sort billing, grades and adviser conversations into “covered by this form” or “needs something else.”	Grades land in “needs separate authorization.”
12 min Draft the question	Model a records-office question: record, recipient, authority.	Write Rafa’s question and the smallest access that would actually help.	Question names one record, one person and asks which permission applies.
5 min Check the limits	Ask Caio’s question: what if there’s an exception?	Add one line saying what they still need to confirm.	Line admits an exception may apply without guessing which.
3 min Exit	Ask for one difference between paying and permission.	Write it in one sentence.	Sentence separates billing access from academic records.

Before class

- Prepare the case documents, one set per pair:
- ✓ Parent and family access authorization form mailed to Rafa, August 28 (illustrative)
 - ✓ College annual FERPA notice posted on the registrar’s page, fall term (illustrative)
 - ✓ Rafa’s family group chat, Sunday 8:47 p.m.
 - ✓ Caio, 24, helping Rafa read the request

Questions to keep asking

- **Pauta**
At 18 or entering college, FERPA rights move to the student. Paying tuition doesn’t move them back.
- **Lupa**
The guide says parent billing access does not include viewing grades. That’s a separate form.

Support every student, then assess

Success looks like

- ✓ States that parents hold the rights for students under 18 in K–12
- ✓ Explains the transfer at 18 or college
- ✓ Includes a question for the school office
- ✓ Contains no real student information

Supports at this level

- Frames: “Right now, __ can see my records. At 18 or in college, __.”
- Picture timeline: middle school → high school → 18/college
- Vocabulary cards: record, consent, rights

Access

- Provide a one-sentence summary of each source above the original text
- Read the FAQ aloud and show a timeline visual
- Spanish vocabulary: expediente, consentimiento, divulgación, derechos
- Students with IEPs may use a fill-in guide instead of writing from scratch
- Never ask students to describe their own family arrangements

Stretch

- Find your own school’s FERPA notice and summarize what it says about directory information and opting out
- Compare FERPA with your state’s student-privacy law, if it has one

Challenge: Add one question you’d ask the school office about who can see your records.

Rubric	Beginning	Developing	Proficient	Advanced
Evidence	No source cited.	Refers to “privacy law” generally.	Cites the transfer rule and the separate-access guide.	Cites both and notes that exceptions exist.
Reasoning	States the rule backwards.	Gets the transfer right but merges billing and grades.	Separates paying from permission correctly.	Explains why least access is a reasonable choice.
Audience & purpose	Tells Rafa what to do.	Gives advice without a next step.	Leaves the decision with Rafa and names the records office.	Respects Rafa’s family relationship while protecting his choice.
Revision	No change.	Fixes one fact.	Fixes the rule and adds a next step.	Explains why each correction matters for Rafa’s decision.

Standards this can show

RI.6.1 Common Core 6–8

RI.7.4 Common Core 6–8

W.6.2 Common Core 6–8

D2.Civ.3.6–8 C3 Framework

D2.Civ.12.9–12 C3 Framework

D3.1.9–12 C3 Framework



Case 7

Who decides what stays on the shelf?

A group chat says one complaint got a novel “banned.” What actually happened, and who decides?

School and public libraries across the country are deciding how to handle challenges to books, and the rules vary by district and state. Students who can tell a complaint from a final decision, and who know where to speak, can take part without spreading rumors or silencing other readers.

In the real world

Chalkbeat Colorado, 2025 Colorado bill to curb school library book challenges clears first legislative hurdle

Chalkbeat Tennessee, 2024 Under stricter Tennessee law, some school library books quietly disappear

Mari

Mira, I found a character in a book like this who made me feel less alone. That’s why I care. Now what does the policy actually say?

You’ll make

Flowchart plus 3—4 sentence message

Time

About 45 minutes

Level

Grades 6—8



The case file

Look at what's actually here before deciding what it means.

Fictional case material

1

Group chat, Thursday 10:12 p.m.

"One parent complained, so that novel is banned. It's gone from the library."



What stage of the process does this message skip? How could you check the second sentence?

Fictional case material

2

§ District reconsideration notice, posted Friday by the school library

"A request for reconsideration has been received for one title in the library collection. Under district policy, the title remains available during the review. A review committee will read the full work and evaluate it against the district's selection criteria. Written input may be submitted by the 15th. The committee's decision may be appealed."



Is the book on the shelf right now? List the stages this notice describes.

Fictional case material

3

§ Review committee input form, due the 15th

Name and role (student, parent, staff or community member). Have you read the entire work? Yes / No. Which selection criteria does your input address? Comments, 300 words maximum.



Who can submit input, and what does the form ask about? Why might it ask whether you read the whole work?

Fictional case material

4

"Mira, I found a character in a book like this who made me feel less alone. That's why I care. Now what does the policy actually say?"

Mari, 19, bookseller and zine maker



What two things does Mari hold together: a personal reason and what else?

Outside the story

The case is fictional. The questions in it are not. Here is where they show up in the real world.

Still missing

Which novel is under review and what the request says, who sits on the review committee, what the district's selection criteria say in full, and what state law, if any, adds to the district policy.

Real-world evidence



Real source

American Library Association, Selection and Reconsideration Policy Toolkit: formal reconsideration

Summary, not a quotation: ALA's example procedure has a review committee whose members read or view the entire work, evaluate it against the collection policy's criteria and vote, with the material remaining available until a formal decision and with an appeal route. ALA presents this as guidance for libraries to adapt, not as law.



Real source

Roald Dahl, Matilda, authorized extract published by Penguin

Summary, not a quotation: in the extract, four-year-old Matilda finds the village public library on her own; the librarian, Mrs Phelps, helps her choose books, and over the following months she reads widely, including classic adult novels.



article

Colorado bill to curb school library book challenges clears first legislative hurdle

[Chalkbeat Colorado, 2025-02-10](#)

A state debated requiring clear reconsideration policies, showing a challenge is a process, not an instant ban.

Discuss before deciding

- Which item did you trust first, and why?
- What would you need to see before repeating the strongest claim?
- Who is missing from these documents?

Who actually gets to decide?

Replace “banned” with the real chain of decisions. Who decides at each stage, which rules bind them, and where can a student’s input land?

Keep, restrict or remove the novel after review

Who decides

The school review committee, which reads the whole work and votes
District-level appeal and, finally, the school board

Under which rule

District reconsideration policy and selection criteria
State law and unsettled First Amendment case law (Pico had no majority opinion)

Who lives with it

Your way in

Written input on the committee form by the 15th

Words that do the work

Challenge

Solicitud de reconsideración

A formal request to reconsider whether a library resource should be available.

A parent filed a request about a novel in Anika’s school library. That started a review, not a removal.

Reconsideration policy

Política de reconsideración

A written process for handling challenges: review, criteria, decision and appeal.

The ALA recommends libraries adopt one.
Anika’s district has its own adopted version.

Selection criteria

Criterios de selección

The standards a library uses to choose and evaluate materials.

The review committee is supposed to judge the whole book against these, not one paragraph.

One student's draft

Write input to the review committee using the published selection criteria.

To the Review Committee, I'm a student at this school, and I'm writing about the novel under review. The district's selection criteria ask the committee to judge each book as a whole¹, not by one passage. Read as a whole, this book follows a character dealing with isolation² and slowly finding people she can trust, and that is why readers my age connect with it. I understand the parent who filed the request is worried about one scene with mature content, and that concern deserves a real answer³. But honestly, anyone who wants a book removed is just trying to control what other people read⁴. I'm asking the committee to keep the novel available and, if the concern is about age level, to consider an age note in the catalog rather than removal. Thank you.

- 1** Strong: the argument is anchored in the committee's own published criterion.
- 2** Good use of the whole-work standard, though one specific scene or detail would make the evidence stronger.
- 3** Good: the writer acknowledges another reader's concern with respect.
- 4** Revise: this assigns a motive to everyone who files a request and contradicts the respect shown one sentence earlier. The committee needs reasons tied to criteria, not judgments of people.

Works well Uses evidence Gap to fix Think about the reader

One revision

Before

But honestly, anyone who wants a book removed is just trying to control what other people read.

After

But the criteria ask about the whole work, and that scene is part of how the story shows the character's isolation.

The revision keeps the disagreement about the book, where the criteria apply, instead of about the parent, which the committee cannot weigh.

Teacher commentary

The input is organized around the committee's criteria, reads the book as a whole and makes a constructive request. One sentence undoes the respectful acknowledgment by attributing a motive to everyone who files a request. Replacing it with a criteria-based reason moves the input to Advanced on Audience, and adding one specific scene would strengthen Evidence.

Teach it in one period

Grades 6—8

Draw the steps of a book review and write a message correcting the group chat.

Sources The Matilda extract, the chat claim and a simplified district process.	Product Flowchart plus 3—4 sentence message
Objective Students distinguish a complaint from a final decision by placing events on a process map and correct a rumor without attacking anyone.	Assessed by The teacher checks the flowchart for the book’s current stage and the message against the four success criteria.

45 minutes	You	Students	Check for
5 min The library scene	Read the authorized Matilda extract where Mrs Phelps helps Matilda find books.	Write what the library gives Matilda.	Answers go beyond “books” to access or belonging.
8 min The chat claim	Show the group chat: “One parent complained, so that novel is banned.”	List what you’d need to know to confirm it.	Lists include stage, policy and who decides.
12 min Read the process	Hand out the district policy excerpt and the ALA reconsideration steps.	Map the stages and mark where the novel is now.	Maps show “under review, still available.”
8 min The legal layer	Explain Pico in two minutes and that state laws vary.	Write one sentence on what the law does and doesn’t settle.	Sentence avoids claiming the law clearly forbids or allows removal.
9 min Prepare input	Model a comment tied to criteria.	Draft a 90-second comment or written input for the committee.	Input names a criterion and a reader’s perspective without speaking for everyone.
3 min Exit	Ask: whose reading experience is missing?	Name one and how to hear it respectfully.	Answer doesn’t put a classmate on the spot.

Before class

- Prepare the case documents, one set per pair:
- ✓ Group chat, Thursday 10:12 p.m.
 - ✓ District reconsideration notice, posted Friday by the school library
 - ✓ Review committee input form, due the 15th
 - ✓ Mari, 19, bookseller and zine maker
- Every document is fictional case material, printable from the online field guide.

Questions to keep asking

- **Lupa**
The notice says “under review.” The chat says “banned.” Those are different stages.
- **Pauta**
ALA guidance isn’t law. The district’s adopted policy and state law govern the process.
- **Onda**
Mari found a character who made her feel less alone. That’s why readers care.

Support every student, then assess

Success looks like

- ✓ Separates complaint from decision
- ✓ Names the current stage
- ✓ Doesn't attack the parent
- ✓ Asks a real question

Supports at this level

- Process flowchart to fill in
- Frames: "A complaint was made. Right now, __. The next step is __."
- Vocabulary: challenge, review, decision, appeal
- Read-aloud

Access

- Offer an audiobook or read-aloud of the Matilda extract (Mari moves between print and audio)
- Provide the process as a visual flowchart
- Spanish vocabulary: biblioteca, reconsideración, criterios, apelación
- Allow oral input
- Never ask students to share personal reasons a book matters to them

Stretch

- Find your district's reconsideration policy and summarize its stages
- Research how your state's laws about school library materials have changed recently

Challenge: Add one question you'd ask the librarian.

Rubric	Beginning	Developing	Proficient	Advanced
Evidence	Repeats "banned."	Mentions a complaint without stage.	States the current stage from the policy.	States stage, next steps and input route.
Reasoning	Declares a legal verdict.	Treats outrage as the argument.	Separates complaint, review and decision.	Connects input to criteria and notes legal uncertainty.
Audience & purpose	Attacks people.	Rallies without direction.	Gives a useful participation route.	Invites participation while respecting other readers and the parent.
Revision	No change.	Tone only.	Corrects the stage and removes attacks.	Explains how each change helps the chat act accurately.

Standards this can show

RI.6.8 Common Core 6–8

RL.7.1 Common Core 6–8

SL.7.1 Common Core 6–8

D2.Civ.11.6-8 C3 Framework

D2.Civ.10.9-12 C3 Framework

D2.Civ.12.9-12 C3 Framework



Case 8

Is it a recommendation or an ad?

If a creator got the product free, do viewers need to know?

Much of what students see online is shaped by relationships between creators and brands, and many students are creators too. Knowing what a clear disclosure looks like helps them judge recommendations and post honestly, whether they have fifty followers or fifty thousand.

In the real world

NBC News, 2023 Influencers warned by FTC over 'inadequate' disclosures of artificial sweetener promotions

ABC News, 2019 Popular YouTuber chimes in on federal product disclosure guide for influencers

Caio

Calma, the cut is good.
Watch it once like a stranger
with the sound off. Can
they tell the book was free?

You'll make

Storyboard plus 3—4 sentence explanation

Time

About 45 minutes

Level

Grades 6—8



The case file

Look at what's actually here before deciding what it means.

Fictional case material

1

Publisher email offering a review copy, sent two weeks before posting

"Hi Gia, we love your book reviews! We'd be glad to send you a free copy of our spring novel for review. There's no obligation to post, but if you do, we'd appreciate a tag. Best, the publicity team"



What did the publisher give, and what did they ask for? Does "no obligation" change whether there is a relationship to disclose?

Fictional case material

2

Gia's review video, first cut, Friday evening (script and caption)

Spoken: "Okay, you guys, I have to tell you about this book because I literally could not put it down!" On-screen text: none. Caption, below the video: "@publisher #booktok"



Where in this video would a viewer learn about the free copy? What does the tag tell them, and what does it leave out?

Fictional case material

3

Watch once as a stranger, phone on mute. 0:00—0:03: does anything say free copy? Caption sits below the video; most people won't open it. Tag = brand name, not relationship.

Caio's edit notes, Saturday 1:30 p.m.



What does Caio want to test before uploading, and why start with the first three seconds?

Fictional case material

4

Viewer comment on a similar review by another creator (illustrative)

"wait was this sponsored?? kind of feels like an ad now"



What changes for this viewer when they learn about the relationship after watching instead of before?

Outside the story

The case is fictional. The questions in it are not. Here is where they show up in the real world.

Still missing

Whether Gia has any other relationship with the publisher, what label the platform itself would show, how many of her viewers watch without sound, and whether the review's strongest claims are supported beyond her own reading.

Real-world evidence



Real source

Federal Trade Commission, Disclosures 101 for Social Media Influencers

Summary, not a quotation: FTC staff guidance says to disclose any financial, employment, personal or family relationship with a brand, including free or discounted products; to place the disclosure where it is hard to miss, with the endorsement; and, in a video, to put the disclosure in the video itself, ideally in both audio and on-screen text, not only in the description.



Real source

Federal Trade Commission, FTC's Endorsement Guides: What People Are Asking

Summary, not a quotation: the FTC's question-and-answer guide explains how the agency applies its Endorsement Guides, which interpret the FTC Act's prohibition on deceptive practices, to reviews, social media posts and other endorsements.



article

Influencers warned by FTC over 'inadequate' disclosures of artificial sweetener promotions [NBC News, 2023-11-15](#)

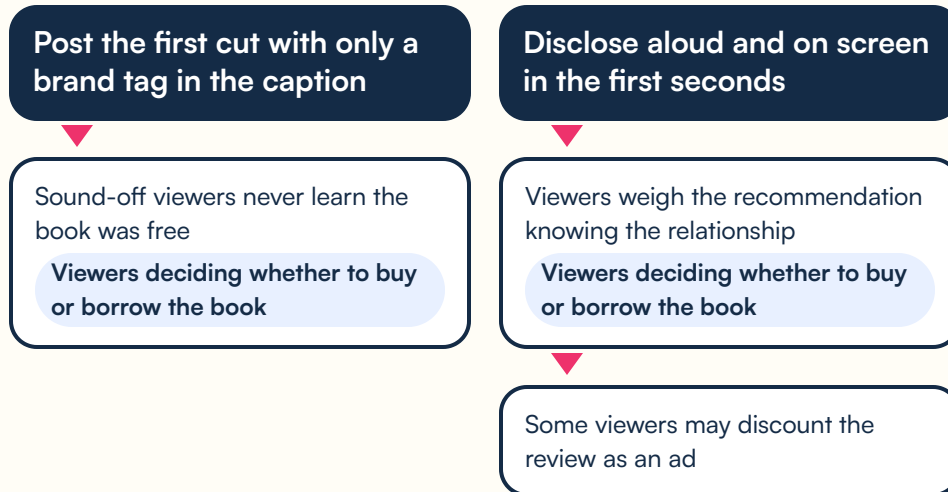
Real creators were warned for not clearly saying they were paid, the exact question this case asks.

Discuss before deciding

- Which item did you trust first, and why?
- What would you need to see before repeating the strongest claim?
- Who is missing from these documents?

If this, then what?

Follow both choices forward. Which consequences can Gia control, which depend on viewers, and what test tells her the disclosure worked?



Words that do the work

Material connection

Conexión material

A relationship with a brand, like payment or a free product, that could affect how viewers weigh a recommendation.

The publisher sent Gia the book free for review. That's a material connection.

Disclosure

Divulgación

A clear statement of that relationship, placed where viewers will notice it.

Tagging the publisher only names a brand. It doesn't say the book was free.

Channel

Canal

The place and format a message travels through, which shapes who sees it.

Viewers watch the video, often without sound. A caption buried below may never be seen.

Consistency

Coherencia

Making sure a message says the same thing across every place it appears.

The disclosure should appear on screen and be said aloud so every viewer gets it.

One student's draft

Write a revised script and caption and a short note on why a tag alone isn't enough.

Revised script: At 0:00, spoken and on screen: "Heads up, the publisher sent me this book for free¹." Then: "Okay, you guys, I could not put this down. The sisters felt so real, and the ending wrecked me. I finished it in two nights."

Caption: Publisher sent me a free copy for review.

@publisher #booktok Note: A tag alone isn't enough because a lot of people watch with the sound off and never open the caption³, and a tag just names the brand without saying the book was free². Now the disclosure is spoken and on screen in the first seconds. Honestly the disclosure is just a formality, because my opinion is real either way.⁴

- 1 Plain words that name the relationship, placed at 0:00 where every viewer meets it.
- 2 Precise reasoning that matches the case: a tag identifies a brand, not the relationship.
- 3 Good audience thinking: the writer considers how viewers actually watch.
- 4 Revise: an honest opinion and a disclosed relationship answer different questions. Viewers need the relationship to decide how much weight to give the opinion, so it is not a formality.

Works well Uses evidence Gap to fix Think about the reader

One revision

Before

~~Honestly the disclosure is just a formality, because my opinion is real either way.~~

After

My opinion is honest, but viewers still deserve to know the book was free so they can decide how much to trust it.

The revision separates the two ideas the task asks about: whether the opinion is sincere, and whether viewers know the relationship that could shape it.

Teacher commentary

The script puts a plain-language disclosure in the first second, spoken and on screen, and the note explains why a tag alone fails. The closing sentence undercuts the work by calling disclosure a formality, blurring the opinion-versus-relationship distinction the task asks for. With that sentence revised, the response reaches Proficient on Reasoning and Advanced on Audience.

Teach it in one period

Grades 6—8

Add a clear disclosure to Gia’s review script and explain where you put it and why.

Sources

The review description, the publisher email and three FTC key points.

Objective

Students identify a material connection and place a clear disclosure where every viewer, including those watching without sound, will notice it.

Product

Storyboard plus 3—4 sentence explanation

Assessed by

The teacher checks the storyboard for clear words, early placement and a sound-off version, and the explanation for a reason tied to viewers.

45 minutes	You	Students	Check for
5 min Watch the review	Describe Gia’s fictional review: enthusiastic, publisher tagged, no mention of free copy.	Rate how much you trust the review, 1—5, and say why.	Ratings come with a reason.
8 min Reveal the connection	Reveal the publisher’s email offering the free copy.	Rate again. What changed, and why?	Students explain context, not dishonesty.
10 min Read the guidance	Read the FTC Disclosures 101 key points aloud.	List three things a good disclosure does.	Lists include clear words, in the video itself, noticeable.
12 min Build the plan	Introduce comms-plan pieces: audience, key message, channel, consistency.	Rewrite the video’s opening and caption with a spoken and on-screen disclosure.	Script names the relationship in plain words in the first seconds.
7 min Stranger test	Caio’s check: watch it like a stranger on a phone, sound off.	Swap scripts; can a sound-off viewer catch the connection?	Each partner confirms or suggests a fix.
3 min Exit	Frame: “I can like the review and still want to know __.”	Complete the frame.	Answers reference the relationship.

Before class

- Prepare the case documents, one set per pair:
- ✓ Publisher email offering a review copy, sent two weeks before posting
 - ✓ Gia’s review video, first cut, Friday evening (script and caption)
 - ✓ Caio’s edit notes, Saturday 1:30 p.m.
 - ✓ Viewer comment on a similar review by another creator (illustrative)

Questions to keep asking

- **Lupa**
The publisher’s email says “free copy for review.” That’s the relationship to disclose.
- **Pauta**
FTC guides explain how the FTC Act’s ban on deception applies to endorsements.

Support every student, then assess

Success looks like

- ✓ Names the relationship clearly
- ✓ Places it in the video, early
- ✓ Works with sound off
- ✓ Keeps Gia's honest opinion

Supports at this level

- Disclosure word bank: free copy, sent by, paid by, ad
- Frames: "I put it __ because viewers __."
- Storyboard with three frames
- Partner discussion first

Access

- Provide a storyboard with the first frame completed
- Read the FTC key points aloud with icons
- Spanish vocabulary: anuncio, patrocinado, divulgación, recomendación
- Allow students to record or draw instead of write
- Reduce to one disclosure line and placement

Stretch

- Analyze three real posts from brands' own accounts (not individual creators) for disclosure
- Compare FTC guidance with another country's advertising standards body

Challenge: Show where the disclosure goes for a viewer with the sound off.

Rubric	Beginning	Developing	Proficient	Advanced
Evidence	No disclosure or claim support.	Tag only.	Names the relationship clearly.	Names the relationship and supports the product claim.
Reasoning	Treats opinion as a substitute for disclosure.	Discloses but can't explain why.	Explains why placement and clarity matter.	Distinguishes opinion, relationship and product claim.
Audience & purpose	Ignores viewers.	Assumes viewers read captions.	Works for sound-off viewers.	Works across channels with consistent wording.
Revision	No change.	Adds a hashtag.	Adds spoken and on-screen disclosure.	Explains each placement choice for different viewers.

Standards this can show

SL.8.2 Common Core 6—8

RI.7.6 Common Core 6—8

W.6.2 Common Core 6—8

D2.Civ.1.6-8 C3 Framework

D2.Civ.6.9-12 C3 Framework

D3.2.9-12 C3 Framework



Case 9

Your ballot is more local than your feed.

What's actually on your ballot, and where do you find out?

National races dominate feeds, but many decisions that shape students' lives, like school boards, judges and local measures, appear lower on the ballot. Knowing how to find your own official ballot and deadlines matters whether you're voting soon or learning how the system works before you can.

In the real world

NPR, 2023 Some states are trying to boost youth voter registration. Here's what they're doing

Ballotpedia News, 2025 Most states allow teenagers to pre-register to vote before turning 18, and some let them vote in primaries

Mateo

Dec doesn't need us picking for him. He needs his own ballot and a registration check before November. Honestly, so do I.

You'll make

Matching sheet plus a poster

Time

About 45 minutes

Level

Grades 6—8



The case file

Look at what's actually here before deciding what it means.

Fictional case material

1

§ Illustrative sample ballot, 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.



Which contests are below the headline race? Which one touches Dec's school, and which touches his bus?

Fictional case material

2

Creator's voter guide, posted three weeks before the election

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



Which lines are facts you can check, and which are picks? Whose deadline is "the 14th"?

Fictional case material

3

Gia's group-chat reminder draft, Sunday 6:30 p.m.

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



What information should stay out of a group chat, and what does Gia share instead?

Fictional case material

4

"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."

Dec, 17, theatre crew



What two things does Dec need to find out, and which official source answers each?

Fictional case material

5

"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."

Mateo, 22, moved from New Bedford for college

Which contests does Mateo find below the headline race, and how would he separate the guide's facts from its picks?

Outside the story

The case is fictional. The questions in it are not. Here is where they show up in the real world.

Still missing

Dec's own state, registration status and deadline, the actual sample ballot for his address, what each local office is responsible for where he lives, and who wrote and funds the creator's guide.

Real-world evidence



Real source

Vote.gov, Preparing to vote: age 18 and under

Summary, not a quotation: Vote.gov explains that in most states, the District of Columbia and U.S. territories people can preregister before turning 18, that you must be 18 to vote, that several states let 17-year-olds vote in primaries if they will be 18 by the general election, and that each person should check their own state's rules.



Real source

U.S. Constitution, Twenty-Sixth Amendment, Section 1 (text as published by the National Constitution Center)

"The right of citizens of the United States, who are eighteen years of age or older, to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of age."



article

Some states are trying to boost youth voter registration. Here's what they're doing [NPR, 2023-08-06](#)

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

Discuss before deciding

- Which item did you trust first, and why?
- What would you need to see before repeating the strongest claim?
- Who is missing from these documents?

Who actually gets to decide?

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

Words that do the work

Sample ballot

Papeleta de muestra

A preview of the contests and measures for your specific address and election.

Dec finds a school board race and a transit measure below the headline race.

Voter guide

Guía para votantes

A publication explaining or recommending choices; it may be neutral or take positions.

A creator's guide explains some races and recommends others. Mateo separates the facts from the picks.

Registration

Inscripción electoral

Signing up to vote where required; rules and deadlines vary by state.

Gia tells friends to check their own state's deadline, not hers.

Preregistration

Preinscripción

In many states, signing up at 16 or 17 so you're registered when eligible.

Anika, 16, checks whether her state lets her preregister.

One student's draft

Write a nonpartisan explainer on one local contest: what the office does, what's on the ballot and where to verify it. Compare how two guides describe the race.

School Board, District 3 What the office does: The school board sets the district budget, hires the superintendent and approves policies like the school calendar. It doesn't run individual classrooms.¹ What's on the ballot: Two seats are open, with four candidates. There's also a transit measure, but that's a city question, not a school board one². Where to verify: Look up your own sample ballot through vote.gov, which sends you to your state's election office. The creator guide says Candidate B is the only one who cares about students, so you should probably vote for her³. Comparing guides: The county guide prints each candidate's statement in their own words.⁴ The creator guide adds opinions about who is best.

- 1 Good: saying what the office does not control keeps readers from asking it for the wrong things.
- 2 Strong jurisdiction thinking: the writer separates two contests on the same ballot.
- 3 Revise: an explainer must stay nonpartisan. Report what the guide claims as the guide's opinion and leave the choice to the reader.
- 4 Good comparison: the writer identifies how the two guides differ in purpose.

Works well Uses evidence Gap to fix Think about the reader

One revision

Before

~~The creator guide says Candidate B is the only one who cares about students, so you should probably vote for her.~~

After

One creator guide recommends a candidate; that is the guide's opinion, so check each candidate's own statement in the county guide.

The revision keeps the explainer nonpartisan while still teaching readers to tell a recommendation from a fact.

Teacher commentary

The explainer describes the office accurately, including its limits, separates the school board from the city measure and compares the two guides by purpose. One sentence slips from explaining into recommending a candidate, which the task rules out. Replacing it with a clearly labeled description of the guide's opinion moves the response to Advanced on Audience.

Teach it in one period

Grades 6—8

Match offices on a sample ballot to the everyday things they decide, then make a poster for families about finding their own ballot.

Sources

An illustrative sample ballot and one-line office descriptions.

Objective

Students connect offices on a ballot to everyday decisions and point families to official, address-specific information without taking sides.

Product

Matching sheet plus a poster

Assessed by

The teacher checks the matching sheet for at least three accurate matches and the poster for official sources and a nonpartisan tone.

45 minutes	You	Students	Check for
5 min Your feed vs. your ballot	Show a feed full of one national race. Ask: what else might be on the ballot?	List guesses.	Lists include local offices.
10 min Read a sample ballot	Hand out an illustrative sample ballot with federal, state and local contests.	Circle one local office and one measure.	Students find the school board race and a local measure.
8 min What does the office do?	Model looking up an office's responsibilities.	Match three offices to three issues students care about.	Matches are accurate (e.g., school board → school budgets).
10 min Guide vs. ballot	Show a creator's voter guide.	Highlight checkable facts in one color, recommendations in another.	Students separate facts from picks.
9 min Official checklist	Show Vote.gov and the age guide; emphasize rules vary.	Write a personal checklist: election office, registration, deadlines, sample ballot.	Checklist uses official sources only.
3 min Exit	Ask: if you can't vote yet, what's one way to take part?	Write one.	Answer names a real route.

Before class

Prepare the case documents, one set per pair:

- ✓ Illustrative sample ballot, November general election
- ✓ Creator's voter guide, posted three weeks before the election
- ✓ Gia's group-chat reminder draft, Sunday 6:30 p.m.
- ✓ Dec, 17, theatre crew

Every document is fictional case material, printable from the online field guide.

Questions to keep asking



Nexo

Your address decides your ballot. A friend two districts over sees different local races.



Pauta

The voting age is 18, but some states let 17-year-olds vote in primaries. Check yours.

Support every student, then assess

Success looks like

- ✓ Matches at least three offices accurately
- ✓ Points to official sources
- ✓ Nonpartisan
- ✓ Explains address-based differences

Supports at this level

- Office-to-issue matching cards
- Frames: “The __ decides __. To find your ballot, __.”
- Vocabulary: ballot, office, measure, register
- Group work

Access

- Provide an illustrated sample ballot with offices color-coded
- Read office descriptions aloud
- Spanish vocabulary: papeleta, inscripción, elección, medida
- Many election offices provide Spanish materials; show where
- Reduce to matching two offices

Stretch

- Find your county’s sample ballot for the next election
 - Research the history of the Twenty-Sixth Amendment
- Challenge:** Add a note about why a friend’s ballot might differ from yours.

Rubric	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.

Standards this can show

RI.6.7 Common Core 6–8

RH.6-8.8 Common Core 6–8

W.8.2 Common Core 6–8

D2.Civ.1.9-12 C3 Framework

D2.Civ.2.9-12 C3 Framework

D2.Civ.2.6-8 C3 Framework



Case 10

A city you can actually reach

If the usual route is blocked, whose job is it to make the trip work?

Getting to school, a library or a city program depends on sidewalks, ramps, buses and information, and when one piece fails, someone's day falls apart. Knowing which law applies and which office to ask turns frustration into a request that can get a route fixed.

In the real world

HISTORY, 2020 When the 'Capitol Crawl' Dramatized the Need for Americans with Disabilities Act

THE CITY, 2025 North Bronx Subway Station to Get Elevators, Nearly a Decade After ADA Lawsuit

Sami

I don't need a viral video, Mateo. I need to know if there's a route that gets me to the bus in twelve minutes.

You'll make

Annotated map plus 3—4 sentences

Time

About 45 minutes

Level

Grades 6—8



The case file

Look at what's actually here before deciding what it means.

Fictional case material

1

Construction detour sign at the corner, posted Monday, photographed Tuesday 4:05 p.m.

**“SIDEWALK CLOSED AHEAD.
PEDESTRIAN DETOUR →”** The arrow points to a path that begins with a flight of stairs.



Where does this detour send people, and who can use that route?

Fictional case material

2

Route map, home to the city workshop, drawn by Sami and Mateo

1. Home to the corner of Elm Street and 4th Avenue: sidewalk clear. 2. Northeast curb ramp: blocked by construction fencing. 3. Bus stop: next bus in 12 minutes. 4. Bus to the parks department building. 5. Workshop entrance and room: not yet checked.



Which stages of the trip does Mateo's photo leave out?

Fictional case material

3

City workshop flyer posted by the parks department

“Free Community Workshop Series. Tuesdays, 5–7 p.m., Parks Department Annex. All welcome! Questions? Call the front desk.” The flyer gives no information about accessible entrances or how to request access.



Does the flyer say how to request access or whom to contact? What would you add?

Fictional case material

4

“The sign says detour. The detour starts with stairs. So, no. Twelve minutes.”

Sami, 23



Why isn't this detour a detour for Sami, and what does she need to know in the next twelve minutes?

Fictional case material

5

“I had the sign on video before I even thought about it. Sami asked if that gets her on the bus. Fair. Camera down.”

Mateo, 22, already filmed the sign

What is the difference between documenting a barrier and making Sami the content?

Outside the story

The case is fictional. The questions in it are not. Here is where they show up in the real world.

Still missing

Whether an accessible detour exists and how it is marked, how long the ramp will be blocked, whether the workshop entrance and room are accessible, and who the city's ADA coordinator is and how complaints are handled.

Real-world evidence



Real source

U.S. Department of Justice, ADA Update: The ADA and City Governments

Summary, not a quotation: under Title II, city programs, services and activities must be accessible, but program access generally does not require making every facility accessible; a city can, for example, move a service to an accessible place. The guide also covers curb ramps during street and sidewalk work and the city's duty to communicate effectively.

article

**When the
'Capitol
Crawl'
Dramatized
the Need
for
Americans
with
Disabilities
Act**

**HISTORY,
2020-07-24**

A throwback to March 12, 1990, when activists climbed the Capitol steps to show what stairs do to access. The ADA was signed that July.

Discuss before deciding

- Which item did you trust first, and why?
- What would you need to see before repeating the strongest claim?
- Who is missing from these documents?

What the evidence can hold up

Sort what the evidence supports. Which claim can you make today, which one needs more facts, and who can supply them?

Evidence	Claim 1 The city is breaking the ADA.	Claim 2 On Tuesday, the posted detour did not work for a wheelchair user.
1 Photo: the northeast curb ramp blocked by fencing on Tuesday at 4:05 p.m.	Narrows	Supports
2 Detour sign points to a path that starts with stairs	—	Supports
3 DOJ: Title II requires program access, not every facility to be accessible	Narrows	—

Still open

- Is there another accessible route to the bus and the workshop? Ask the ADA coordinator.

Words that do the work

Jurisdiction

Jurisdicción

Which laws and which government bodies apply to a place or program.

ADA Title II covers the city-run workshop and city sidewalks. Private businesses fall under Title III.

Claim vs. evidence

Afirmación y prueba

A claim says something is true; evidence is the record that supports or challenges it.

Mateo's photo shows one blocked curb ramp. It can't prove the whole route is inaccessible or illegal.

Program access

Acceso al programa

Under ADA Title II, a government program as a whole must be accessible, even if not every older facility is.

The city can make the workshop accessible through another entrance or location. The question is whether it works.

One student's draft

Write an access report to the city's ADA coordinator about the blocked route, with one sentence explaining why you ask rather than claim a violation.

To the City ADA Coordinator, I'm writing about the construction at Elm Street and 4th Avenue, next to the bus stop. On Tuesday at about 4:05 p.m., the curb ramp on the northeast corner was blocked by construction fencing¹, and the detour sign pointed to a route with stairs. My friend Sami, who uses a wheelchair and said I could mention her², couldn't reach the bus stop that way. The city is clearly violating the ADA by blocking the ramp.³ Could you tell us whether there is an accessible detour, how it is marked and how long the ramp will be blocked? We would also like to know how to report this if it happens again. Why I asked instead of claimed: I only saw one corner at one time⁴.

- 1 Precise location, time and observation: the details an office needs to find the problem.
- 2 Good: the writer checked with Sami before including her.
- 3 Revise: one observation cannot establish a violation, and the sentence contradicts the writer's own rationale. Program access concerns the whole program, so ask about the detour instead.
- 4 An honest statement of the evidence's limit, which is exactly why a question fits better than a claim.

Works well Uses evidence Gap to fix Think about the reader

One revision

Before

~~The city is clearly violating the ADA by blocking the ramp.~~

After

Because the city runs the workshop and maintains the sidewalk, we understand ADA Title II may apply, so we wanted to ask you directly.

The revision names the relevant law as the reason for contacting this office without declaring a violation the evidence cannot support.

Teacher commentary

The report is specific, respects Sami's consent and makes a clear, answerable request. One sentence declares a violation that the writer's own rationale admits the evidence cannot show. Replacing it with a question-framed reference to Title II moves the report to Proficient on Reasoning and protects its credibility with the office.

Teach it in one period

Grades 6—8

Map Sami’s trip from home to the workshop and mark each place something could go wrong.

Sources

The route map, the detour sign description and Sami’s conversation.

Objective

Students treat access as a whole journey, locate barriers along a route and form a question for the office responsible.

Product

Annotated map plus 3—4 sentences

Assessed by

The teacher checks the map for at least three stages and an accurate description of the blocked ramp, and the sentences for a question that respects Sami’s choices.

45 minutes	You	Students	Check for
5 min The blocked route	Describe Sami’s trip: blocked curb ramp, detour sign pointing to stairs, bus in 12 minutes.	Write what Sami needs right now and what could be asked later.	Students separate the immediate need from the follow-up.
10 min What the photo shows	Show Mateo’s photo. Ask what it proves and what it doesn’t.	Sort statements into “the photo shows” and “we’d need more.”	“The city broke the law” goes in “need more.”
10 min Which law?	Explain Titles II and III of the ADA and program access using the DOJ page.	Match three places (city workshop, sidewalk, private café) to the right title.	Workshop and sidewalk → Title II; café → Title III.
10 min Route audit	Model a route audit: find, get there, enter, take part, leave.	Complete an audit for Sami’s trip using case evidence.	Audit lists at least three stages, not just the entrance.
7 min Write the request	Model a message to the ADA coordinator.	Draft a 60—100 word message with location, observation and request.	Message avoids declaring a violation and makes a specific ask.
3 min Exit	Ask: which barrier would a photo miss?	Write one.	Answers include information, timing or communication barriers.

Before class

Prepare the case documents, one set per pair:

- ✓ Construction detour sign at the corner, posted Monday, photographed Tuesday 4:05 p.m.
- ✓ Route map, home to the city workshop, drawn by Sami and Mateo
- ✓ City workshop flyer posted by the parks department
- ✓ Sami, 23

Questions to keep asking



Pauta

Title II covers city programs and sidewalks. Private businesses are Title III.



Lupa

The photo shows one blocked ramp at one time. It can’t show the whole trip.

Support every student, then assess

Success looks like

- ✓ Marks at least three stages of the trip
- ✓ Describes the blocked ramp accurately
- ✓ Names one question for the city
- ✓ Asks what Sami wants instead of deciding for her

Supports at this level

- Printed route map with five stages
- Frames: “At __, the barrier was __. We could ask __.”
- Vocabulary: route, barrier, ramp, detour
- Talk with a partner first

Access

- Provide a printed route map with stages labeled
- Read the DOJ summary aloud with a visual of Titles II and III
- Spanish vocabulary: ruta, barrera, rampa, desvío
- Allow an oral report
- Reduce to mapping two stages

Stretch

- Find your city’s ADA coordinator page and summarize its complaint process
- Research how your city communicates construction detours

Challenge: Add one barrier a photo would miss, like missing information online.

Rubric	Beginning	Developing	Proficient	Advanced
Evidence	No location or time.	General description.	Specific location, time and observation.	Specific observation plus what remains unknown.
Reasoning	Declares a violation.	Mixes observation and conclusion.	Separates observation from legal question.	Connects observation to program access and asks the right office.
Audience & purpose	Threatening or vague.	Polite but no clear request.	Specific, answerable request to the right office.	Request plus how to report future issues.
Revision	No change.	Tone only.	Adds specifics and removes the legal conclusion.	Explains how each change helps the city act and respects Sami.

Standards this can show

RI.8.8 Common Core 6—8

RH.6-8.7 Common Core 6—8

W.7.2 Common Core 6—8

D2.Civ.4.6-8 C3 Framework

D2.Civ.12.9-12 C3 Framework

D2.Civ.13.9-12 C3 Framework



Case 11

Same work. Different pay. Why?

Jordy and Gia worked the same event. Why are their rates different, and how do you ask?

Pay gaps can come from fair criteria, mistakes or discrimination, and workers usually can't tell which from a paycheck alone. Knowing what the law protects, including the right most private-sector workers have to talk about pay, helps young workers ask without guessing or getting silenced.

In the real world

NPR, 2022 The U.S. national women's soccer team wins \$24 million in equal pay settlement

NPR, 2020 Federal Judge Dismisses U.S. Women's Soccer Team's Equal Pay Claim

Jordy

We were both there till close. I want to know why the numbers differ. Not my statement in a post before we've even asked.

You'll make

Chart plus a one-sentence question

Time

About 45 minutes

Level

Grades 6—8



The case file

Look at what's actually here before deciding what it means.

Fictional case material

1

Jordy's pay statement (illustrative), Saturday event, paid the following Friday

Event crew, Saturday. Hours: 8.0 at \$16.50. Gross pay for the event: \$132.00.



What rate and hours does this show? What does it not show about how the rate was set?

Fictional case material

2

Event crew schedule with job titles, posted the Wednesday before

Saturday event, 3:00—11:00 p.m. Crew: Gia (shift lead), Jordy and two other crew members. Setup, 3:00—5:00: all crew. Caption and audio check: Jordy. Closing, 10:00—11:00: all crew.



What does "shift lead" mean on this schedule? What would you need to know to decide whether it explains the rate?

Fictional case material

3

Jordy and Gia comparing notes, Sunday 1:15 p.m.

Gia: I'm fine with you knowing my rate. I just don't want my statement posted anywhere.

Jordy: Got it. Did you do anything different as shift lead?

Gia: I opened up and handled one guest issue. Honestly, I don't know if that's why. We have a question, not a finding.



What does each of them actually know? What has Gia agreed to share, and with whom?

Fictional case material

4

"We were both there till close. I want to know why the numbers differ. Not my statement in a post before we've even asked."

Jordy, 20, event crew and caption editor



What order does Jordy want to do things in, and why?

Outside the story

The case is fictional. The questions in it are not. Here is where they show up in the real world.

Still missing

What the shift-lead role officially involves and how rates are set, whether Gia's higher rate reflects experience or other criteria, how other crew members are paid, and whether the company has any written pay policy.

Real-world evidence



Real source

U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, Youth@Work: Pay Discrimination

Summary, not a quotation: the EEOC explains that the Equal Pay Act requires men and women to be paid equally for the same work at the same workplace, that other laws it enforces bar pay discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age (40 or older) or genetic information, that compensation includes wages, overtime, bonuses and benefits, and that retaliation for complaining is prohibited.



Real source

National Labor Relations Board, Your Right to Discuss Wages

Summary, not a quotation: the NLRB says that for employees covered by the National Labor Relations Act, employers may not have rules banning wage discussions or requiring permission for them, and may not punish, question, threaten or monitor employees for such discussions, whether or not they have a union.



article

The U.S. national women's soccer team wins \$24 million in equal pay settlement [NPR, 2022-02-22](#)

A real 'same work, different pay' dispute that ended in a settlement and a promise of equal rates.

Discuss before deciding

- Which item did you trust first, and why?
- What would you need to see before repeating the strongest claim?
- Who is missing from these documents?

Same moment, different accounts

Line up the accounts. Where do they agree, where do they differ, and which difference could be a legitimate factor? What would you need to find out before calling it unfair?

Account 1

Jordy's record: 8 hours, setup, caption and audio check, closing, \$16.50

Account 2

Gia's account: same hours, setup and closing, opened up and handled one guest issue, \$18.00

Account 3

The schedule: Gia listed as shift lead, with no description of the role

Where they agree

Both worked the same event, the same hours, and setup and closing.

Where they differ

Title and rate: shift lead at \$18.00 versus crew at \$16.50

Check: Ask the supervisor how rates are set and what the shift-lead role requires

Words that do the work

Equal Pay Act

Ley de Igualdad Salarial

A 1963 federal law requiring equal pay for substantially equal work regardless of sex, with some allowed exceptions.

One of the laws the EEOC page describes. It covers sex-based pay differences, not every difference.

Title VII

Título VII

Part of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 barring employment discrimination, including pay, based on race, color, religion, sex or national origin.

Title VII covers pay decisions based on race, color, religion, sex or national origin at covered employers; the Equal Pay Act covers only sex-based differences.

Compensation

Compensación

All pay and benefits, including rates, bonuses and overtime.

Jordy's statement shows \$16.50 an hour; Gia's shows \$18.00. Both worked setup and closing.

One student's draft

Build a private comparison sheet and draft Jordy's message to the supervisor.

Comparison sheet: Jordy worked the Saturday event, 3 to 11 p.m.: setup, the caption and audio check, and closing, at \$16.50 an hour. Gia worked the same event and hours, setup and closing, at \$18.00. The schedule lists Gia as "shift lead." Message: Hi Dana, I have a question about my rate for Saturday's event. I worked 3 to 11 p.m., did setup and closing, and ran the caption and audio check¹. My statement shows \$16.50 an hour², and I know Gia was paid \$18.00 for the same shift³. Could you explain how rates are set for event crew, and what the shift-lead role involves⁴? Thanks, Jordy

- 1 Precise hours and duties: the facts the supervisor needs to compare roles.
- 2 Good: Jordy states their own record, which is theirs to share.
- 3 Revise: this names a coworker and her pay without her permission. Jordy can raise the question without exposing Gia's information.
- 4 Strong: the question targets the one legitimate factor that might explain the difference.

Works well Uses evidence Gap to fix Think about the reader

One revision

Before

~~My statement shows \$16.50 an hour, and I know Gia was paid \$18.00 for the same shift.~~

After

My statement shows \$16.50 an hour, and I understand another worker on the same shift was paid a higher rate.

The revision keeps the question specific while respecting that Gia's pay is hers to share, which also keeps the conversation about criteria rather than about a coworker.

Teacher commentary

The sheet is accurate, and the message is specific, respectful and focused on the one legitimate factor that could explain the gap. Naming Gia and her rate without her permission is the one serious miss, because the case makes clear her information is hers to share. With that line revised, the message reaches Advanced on Audience and Proficient on Evidence.

Teach it in one period

Grades 6—8

Make a side-by-side chart of Jordy’s and Gia’s work, then write one question Jordy could ask.

Sources

The two illustrative statements and the event schedule.

Objective

Students compare two workers’ records before explaining a difference and turn the comparison into a question instead of an accusation.

Product

Chart plus a one-sentence question

Assessed by

The teacher checks the chart for accurate duties and hours and the question for specificity, with no assumed cause and no one else’s private information.

45 minutes	You	Students	Check for
5 min Two statements	Show illustrative statements: Jordy \$16.50/hr, Gia \$18.00/hr, same event, same hours.	Write three possible explanations.	Lists include legitimate and illegitimate reasons.
8 min Compare the work	Hand out the event schedule and job titles.	Build a table: duties, hours, title, rate.	Students notice Gia’s “shift lead” title and ask what it involved.
10 min What the law covers	Summarize the EEOC youth page: Equal Pay Act, Title VII, legitimate factors.	Match each explanation to “could be lawful,” “could be unlawful” or “need facts.”	Most land in “need facts.”
7 min Talking about pay	Explain that federal labor law protects most private-sector workers who discuss pay.	Discuss: whose choice is it to go public?	Students say Jordy decides.
12 min Write the question	Model: “We compared these duties and hours. Can you explain the rate?”	Draft Jordy’s message to the supervisor.	Message names duties and hours and asks for the criteria.
3 min Exit	Frame: “An explanation that would satisfy me is __. One that wouldn’t is __.”	Complete it.	Answers distinguish legitimate factors.

Before class

- Prepare the case documents, one set per pair:
- ✓ Jordy’s pay statement (illustrative), Saturday event, paid the following Friday
 - ✓ Event crew schedule with job titles, posted the Wednesday before
 - ✓ Jordy and Gia comparing notes, Sunday 1:15 p.m.
 - ✓ Jordy, 20, event crew and caption editor

Questions to keep asking

- 

Pauta
Equal Pay Act, Title VII and other laws each cover different reasons for a pay gap.
- 

Lupa
Gia’s title says “shift lead.” Did she do lead work? That could explain it.

Support every student, then assess

Success looks like

- ✓ Compares duties and hours accurately
- ✓ Asks a specific question
- ✓ Doesn't assume the cause
- ✓ Respects Jordy's privacy

Supports at this level

- Comparison table
- Frames: "Both __. But __. I want to ask __."
- Vocabulary: rate, duties, fair, reason
- Partner talk first

Access

- Provide a pre-built comparison table
- Read the EEOC page aloud with visuals
- Spanish vocabulary: salario, tarifa, discriminación, criterios
- Allow oral message drafting
- Reduce to comparing duties and rates

Stretch

- Find your state labor department's page on pay equity
- Research the EEOC's filing deadlines and how they vary by state

Challenge: Name one reason for the difference that would be fair and one that wouldn't.

Rubric	Beginning	Developing	Proficient	Advanced
Evidence	Relies on assumption.	Mentions the gap only.	Cites duties, hours and rate.	Cites records and acknowledges what isn't known.
Reasoning	Declares discrimination.	Assumes the reason.	Asks for criteria before concluding.	Identifies possible legitimate factors to test.
Audience & purpose	Threatens or exposes coworkers.	Polite but vague.	Specific question to the right person.	Specific question that protects coworkers' privacy.
Revision	No change.	Tone only.	Replaces conclusion with a question.	Explains how changes protect Jordy and get an answer.

Standards this can show

RH.6-8.7 Common Core 6—8

RI.7.8 Common Core 6—8

W.8.1 Common Core 6—8

D2.Civ.12.9-12 C3 Framework

D2.Civ.14.9-12 C3 Framework

D2.His.1.9-12 C3 Framework



Case 12

A protest is not one legal question

When does a school get to limit what students say?

Students speak up at school through shirts, posters, walkouts and posts, and they often hear either “you have free speech” or “you have no rights here.” Both are too simple, and knowing how precedent really works helps students speak effectively without walking into avoidable trouble.

In the real world

PBS NewsHour, 2021 Student free speech makes it to the Supreme Court in former high school cheerleader's case

PBS NewsHour (Associated Press), 2021 Supreme Court rules in favor of cheerleader who published critical social media post in First Amendment case

Anika

The feeling is real. But “free speech, end of story” isn’t a fact pattern. What did the poster say, where did it go up, and under whose rule?

You'll make

Chart plus 3—5 sentences

Time

About 45 minutes

Level

Grades 6—8



The case file

Look at what's actually here before deciding what it means.

Fictional case material

1

Anika's poster, first version, printed Tuesday 3:15 p.m.

**"KEEP OUR LIBRARY OPEN AT LUNCH.
Wear blue Thursday."** A photo of the school's sign and logo runs across the top. No student name or group appears anywhere on the poster.



Who does this poster look like it comes from? Which single element does most of that work?

Fictional case material

2

§ Student handbook, posting policy, p. 14 (illustrative excerpt)

Students may post materials on the student bulletin boards outside the cafeteria and the library. Materials must be approved by the main office and must show the name of the student or group responsible.



Where are student posters allowed, and who approves them? What would the first version need to change to follow this rule?

Fictional case material

3

Group chat suggesting a walkout, Wednesday 9:02 p.m.

"If they take the poster down we walk out Thursday.
Tinker says they can't touch us."

Reply: "Wait, wear blue AND walk out??"



Which part is expression, and which is leaving class? What does the first message assume about Tinker?

Fictional case material

4

"I put the school sign across the top because it looked good. Now it reads like the school is announcing it. It isn't."

Mateo, 22, did the photo and layout



Why might it matter, legally and practically, whether a poster looks school-sponsored?

Outside the story

The case is fictional. The questions in it are not. Here is where they show up in the real world.

Still missing

What the attendance policy says about leaving class, whether the school has objected to the poster or only might, whether the people shown in the photo agreed to its use, and what process the school follows before any discipline.

Real-world evidence



Real source

U.S. Courts, Facts and Case Summary: *Tinker v. Des Moines*

Summary, not a quotation: public-school students were suspended for wearing black armbands to protest the Vietnam War. The Supreme Court ruled for the students, reasoning that a school could not restrict their expression because of a mere fear of disruption.



Real source

Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District, 393 U.S. 503 (1969), majority opinion

"It can hardly be argued that either students or teachers shed their constitutional rights to freedom of speech or expression at the schoolhouse gate." ... "But, in our system, undifferentiated fear or apprehension of disturbance is not enough to overcome the right to freedom of expression."



video

Student free speech makes it to the Supreme Court in former high school cheerleader's case [PBS NewsHour, 2021-04-28](#)

Explains the Snapchat case the Court used to ask when a school can punish off-campus student speech.

Discuss before deciding

- Which item did you trust first, and why?
- What would you need to see before repeating the strongest claim?
- Who is missing from these documents?

What the evidence can hold up

Test the slogan against the facts. Which evidence supports each claim, which challenges it, and which fact would you still need?

Evidence	Claim 1 Tinker means nobody can face consequences for walking out.	Claim 2 The wear-blue plan closely matches Tinker’s facts.	Claim 3 The poster should carry a student byline instead of the school logo.
1 Tinker’s facts: silent armbands, no substantial disruption, a public school	Narrows	Supports	—
2 A walkout means leaving class, which falls under the attendance rule	Challenges	—	—
3 The logo photo makes the poster look like school-sponsored speech	—	—	Supports

Still open

- What does the attendance policy say, and what process follows?

Words that do the work

Precedent

Precedente

An earlier court decision that guides later cases with similar facts.

Tinker v. Des Moines (1969) guides public-school speech, but only as far as the new facts match.

Constitutional right

Derecho constitucional

A protection from the Constitution that limits what government, including public schools, can do.

The First Amendment limits Anika’s public school. A private school isn’t bound the same way.

Substantial disruption

Perturbación sustancial

Tinker’s test: a public school may limit student speech if it would substantially disrupt school or invade others’ rights.

Wearing blue Thursday is quiet like the armbands. Leaving class mid-period is conduct under an attendance rule.

One student's draft

Write a fact-pattern brief comparing Tinker with the wear-blue plan and the walkout.

Facts: In Tinker (1969), public-school students wore black armbands to protest the Vietnam War and were suspended. Rule: The Supreme Court said students keep free-speech rights at school unless their expression would substantially disrupt school or invade others' rights¹.

Application: Anika's wear-blue Thursday plan is a lot like the armbands. It is silent and doesn't stop class, so Tinker probably protects it.² The walkout is also protected because it is a protest just like Tinker.³ Open questions: We don't know what the attendance policy says⁴ or whether the school would count a walkout as a disruption. We also need to know whether the school has any rule about clothing.

- 1 Accurate rule, including the limit most first drafts leave out.
- 2 Good application: the writer matches specific facts and says "probably" instead of promising a legal outcome.
- 3 Revise: leaving class is conduct under an attendance rule, which Tinker does not settle. Calling both "protest" hides the fact that changes the question.
- 4 Strong open question: it names the exact missing fact that would decide the walkout issue.

Works well Uses evidence Gap to fix Think about the reader

One revision

Before

~~The walkout is also protected because it is a protest just like Tinker.~~

After

The walkout is different: the message may be similar, but leaving class is conduct covered by the attendance policy, so Tinker alone doesn't answer it.

The revision separates the message from the action, which is the distinction the case turns on.

Teacher commentary

The brief states the rule accurately and applies it carefully to the wear-blue plan. It then treats the walkout as the same fact pattern because both are protests, which is the slogan the case warns against. Separating speech from conduct moves it to Proficient on Reasoning, and adding the logo question would reach Advanced.

Teach it in one period

Grades 6—8

Make a two-column chart comparing the Tinker armbands with Anika’s wear-blue plan, then explain one way they’re alike and one way they’re different.

Sources

The U.S. Courts Tinker summary (read aloud) and the poster description.

Objective

Students compare a precedent’s facts with a new situation and separate a quiet message from the act of leaving class.

Product

Chart plus 3—5 sentences

Assessed by

The teacher checks the chart for accurate Tinker facts, one real similarity and one real difference, and listens for the speech-versus-conduct distinction in discussion.

45 minutes	You	Students	Check for
5 min The slogan	Write on the board: “Tinker means nobody can face consequences for walking out.”	Agree, disagree or unsure, with one reason.	Students commit to a position before reading.
10 min Read the precedent	Read the U.S. Courts Tinker summary aloud: facts, ruling, reasoning.	Fill a fact-pattern card for Tinker: expression, place, school action, reason.	Cards name armbands, public school, suspension, no substantial disruption.
12 min Compare fact patterns	Introduce Anika’s poster, the wear-blue plan and a friend’s walkout idea.	Build a three-column comparison and mark which facts match Tinker.	Students separate quiet expression from leaving class.
8 min The logo problem	Explain school-sponsored speech (Hazelwood) in one minute.	Decide what to change so the poster reads as student speech, not an official notice.	Revisions remove the logo photo or add a clear student byline.
7 min Draft the next questions	Model: “Which rule is the school citing, and what process follows?”	Write two questions for a school contact about the posting policy.	Questions are about specific rules and procedures, not slogans.
3 min Exit	Frame: “A fact that would make Tinker less useful here is __.”	Complete the frame.	Answer names a changed fact like conduct, sponsorship or private school.

Before class

- Prepare the case documents, one set per pair:
- ✓ Anika’s poster, first version, printed Tuesday 3:15 p.m.
 - ✓ Student handbook, posting policy, p. 14 (illustrative excerpt)
 - ✓ Group chat suggesting a walkout, Wednesday 9:02 p.m.
 - ✓ Mateo, 22, did the photo and layout

Questions to keep asking



Pauta

Tinker covers public schools. A private school isn’t bound by the First Amendment the same way.



Lupa

The armbands were silent and caused no substantial disruption. That’s the fact the ruling leaned on.

Support every student, then assess

Success looks like

- ✓ Describes Tinker's facts accurately
- ✓ Names one similarity and one difference
- ✓ Separates the message from leaving class
- ✓ Avoids "you can say anything" or "you have no rights"

Supports at this level

- Picture cards: armband, blue shirt, poster, empty classroom
- Frames: "Both __. But __."
- Vocabulary: precedent, disruption, rule
- Discussion before writing

Access

- Provide an illustrated two-page Tinker summary
- Read case summaries aloud and pause for paraphrase
- Spanish vocabulary: precedente, expresión, perturbación, política escolar
- Allow oral responses or a chart instead of a paragraph
- Reduce to one comparison: armbands vs. wear-blue

Stretch

- Read about Bethel v. Fraser (1986) and Morse v. Frederick (2007) and add them to the comparison
- Find your district's student expression or posting policy and compare it with Tinker

Challenge: Add a row for the walkout idea and explain why it raises a different question.

Rubric	Beginning	Developing	Proficient	Advanced
Evidence	No case facts.	Names Tinker without its rule.	States Tinker's facts and substantial-disruption test.	Adds a second precedent or the walkout exercise accurately.
Reasoning	Treats a slogan as the answer.	Applies Tinker to everything.	Compares facts and separates speech from conduct.	Varies facts to show where the precedent stops fitting.
Audience & purpose	Tells others to break rules.	Argues for one side only.	Recommends a clear next question for the school.	Balances effective expression with respect for process.
Revision	No change.	Softens tone only.	Adds the rule's limit and removes a legal conclusion.	Explains how each edit makes the argument more precise.

Standards this can show

RH.6-8.2 Common Core 6—8

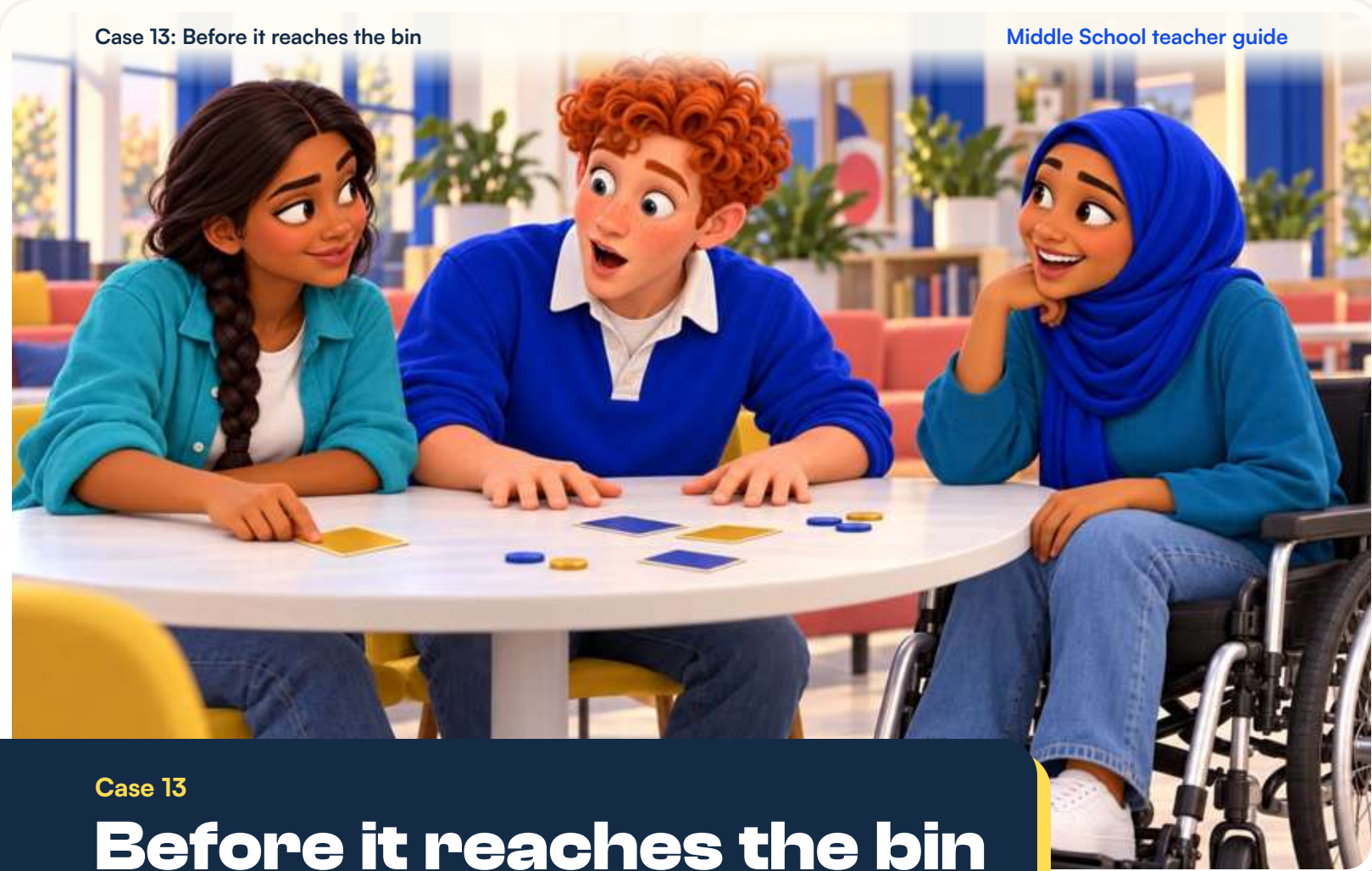
RI.8.8 Common Core 6—8

W.8.1 Common Core 6—8

D2.Civ.8.6-8 C3 Framework

D2.Civ.4.9-12 C3 Framework

D2.Civ.10.9-12 C3 Framework



Case 13

Before it reaches the bin

Could the crew make less waste before anyone reaches the recycling bin?

Cities spend public money collecting and managing waste, and the costs of landfills and pollution don't land evenly on every neighborhood. Students who look upstream at what gets bought and reused can make real changes at school events and ask better questions of their local government.

In the real world

NPR, 2018 Starbucks To Eliminate Plastic Straws In Its Stores By 2020

NPR, 2018 Why People With Disabilities Want Bans On Plastic Straws To Be More Flexible

Dec

Half this box is packaging around tiny parts. Before we redo the recycling sign, can we just order smarter?

You'll make

Materials sheet plus 3—4 sentences

Time

About 45 minutes

Level

Grades 6—8



The case file

Look at what's actually here before deciding what it means.

Fictional case material

1

Screening supply list, last Friday's event

Single-use cups (plastic-lined paper, labeled "recyclable"): about 120.
Paper plates: 80. Printed flyers: 150. Paper straws, on request: 40.
Folding chairs: borrowed from the bookshop.



Which item was used the most, and could it be reduced or reused?

Fictional case material

2

Parts order with packaging, delivered Tuesday to the theatre shop

Three separate orders of small LED connectors and switches, placed over one week and delivered together: one full box, about half of it plastic air pillows and foam around tiny parts.



What could the next order change before any packaging reaches the shop?

Fictional case material

3

§ City accepted-materials list, current sanitation guide (illustrative)

Accepted in recycling: metal cans, glass bottles and jars, rigid plastic bottles and containers, flattened cardboard. Not accepted: plastic-lined paper cups, plastic bags and film, foam, items labeled compostable.



Does this list accept the cups the crew bought? What does the word "recyclable" on the cup actually tell you?

Fictional case material

4

"Half this box is packaging around tiny parts. Before we redo the recycling sign, can we just order smarter?"

Dec, 17, theatre crew



Where on the waste hierarchy is Dec trying to act?

Fictional case material

5

"Before anyone says this saves money or energy, what are we counting? Washing takes water and time too."

Anika, 16, theatre tech crew

What would a fair comparison need to include, and what would it leave out?

Outside the story

The case is fictional. The questions in it are not. Here is where they show up in the real world.

Still missing

How many cups washable reuse would actually replace, what washing costs in water and volunteer time, whether the bookshop can lend cups every time, and where the city's trash and recycling actually go.

Real-world evidence



Real source

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Sustainable Materials Management: Non-Hazardous Materials and Waste Management Hierarchy

Summary, not a quotation: EPA ranks approaches from most to least environmentally preferred as source reduction and reuse, then recycling and composting, then energy recovery, then treatment and disposal, while noting that no single approach suits all materials and circumstances.

article

**Starbucks
To Eliminate
Plastic
Straws In Its
Stores By
2020**
[NPR, 2018-
07-09](#)

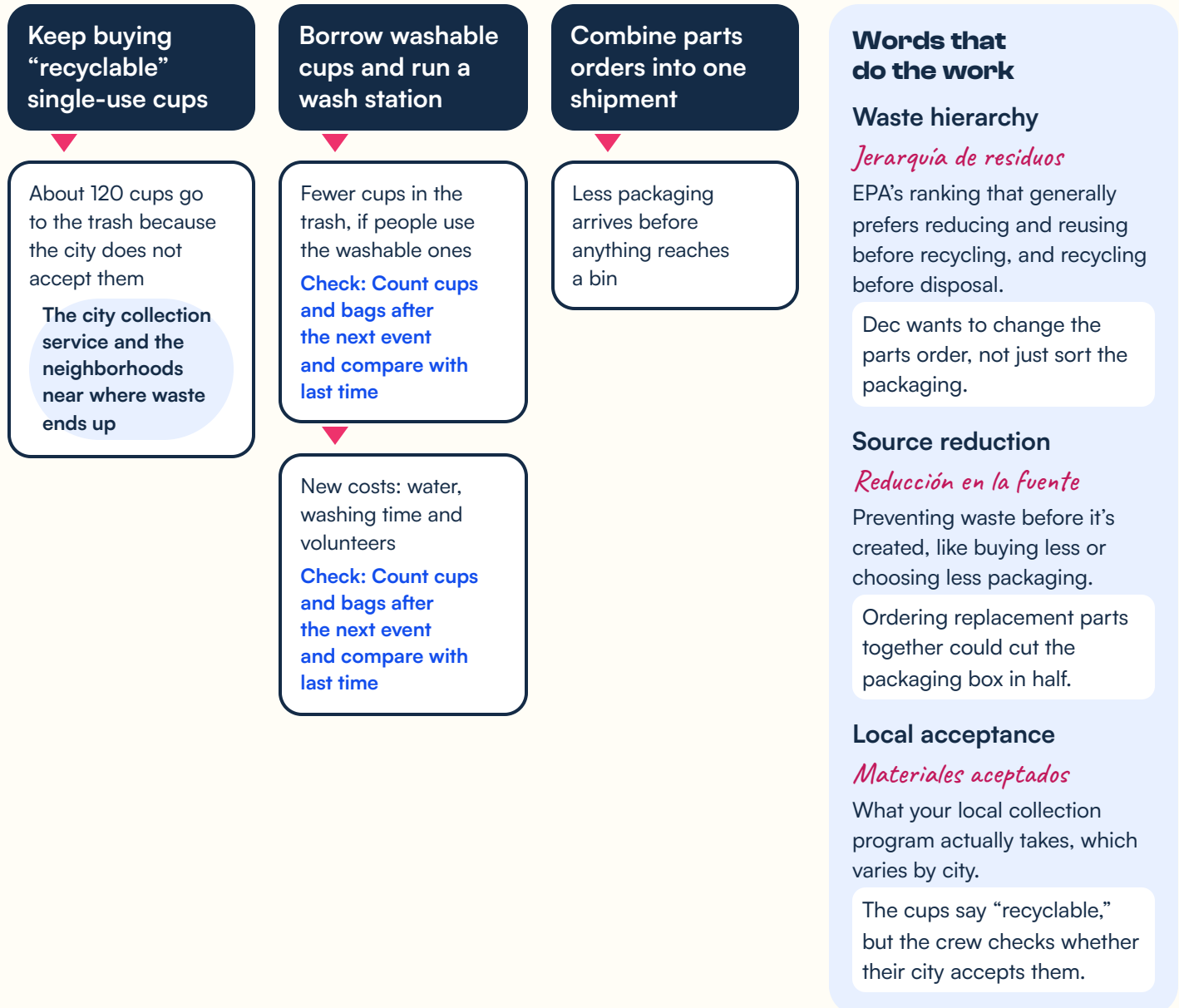
A throwback
to a company
cutting waste
at the
counter,
before
anything
reached
a bin.

Discuss before deciding

- Which item did you trust first, and why?
- What would you need to see before repeating the strongest claim?
- Who is missing from these documents?

If this, then what?

Follow each choice to its consequences, including new costs. Which consequence would you measure first, and what would count as success?



One student's draft

Write a proposal to the event organizers for one purchasing change, with a measurement plan.

Proposal: Replace most single-use cups at the next screening. Last Friday we used about 120 single-use cups², and the city's accepted-materials list doesn't take that kind of cup¹, so they all went to the trash even though they say "recyclable." We propose borrowing 60 washable cups from the bookshop and running a wash station. We'll keep compostable cups available for anyone who needs a disposable one³, like people who can't use a heavy cup. This change will definitely save money and cut our waste in half.⁴ To measure it, we'll count the cups used and thrown away after the event and compare with last time.

- 1 Strong: the writer checks the local rule instead of trusting the label.
- 2 Good use of a count as the baseline for the proposal.
- 3 Good: the access concern is built into the plan rather than added as an afterthought.
- 4 Revise: nothing has been measured yet, and washing has costs of its own. Say what you expect and let the count after the event decide.

Works well Uses evidence Gap to fix Think about the reader

One revision

Before

~~This change will definitely save money and cut our waste in half.~~

After

We expect fewer cups in the trash, but we won't claim savings until we compare the counts and the cost of running the wash station.

The revision matches the claim to the evidence and names a cost the original sentence ignored, which makes the proposal more credible to organizers.

Teacher commentary

The proposal picks one specific change, checks local acceptance, uses a baseline count and builds in an access option and a measurement plan. One sentence overclaims results that have not been measured and ignores the cost of washing. Qualifying it moves the proposal to Advanced on Reasoning.

Teach it in one period

Grades 6—8

Make a materials sheet for the next Common Room screening and pick one change to try.

Sources

The EPA hierarchy graphic and the illustrative supply list.

Objective

Students use a waste hierarchy and a simple count to choose one realistic change and plan how to check whether it worked.

Product

Materials sheet plus 3—4 sentences

Assessed by

The teacher checks the sheet for quantities, a reduction or reuse option, a named trade-off and a way to measure.

45 minutes	You	Students	Check for
5 min The packaging box	Describe Dec’s full box of packaging from replacement parts.	Guess: where did this waste start?	Guesses point upstream to ordering.
8 min The hierarchy	Show EPA’s hierarchy; stress it’s a general framework.	Place five items (packaging, cups, chairs, parts, flyers) on the hierarchy.	Students place reduction options above recycling.
10 min Check local rules	Hand out the city’s illustrative accepted-materials list.	Check whether the “recyclable” cups are accepted.	Students find the label and the local list disagree.
10 min Materials sheet	Model the event materials sheet.	Fill in item, number used, reduction option, disposal rule, trade-off.	Each row has a trade-off, including access.
9 min One change	Anika’s rule: pick one repeated item and measure.	Draft a proposal for one change and how to measure it.	Proposal has a before/after number.
3 min Exit	Ask: could reducing waste create an access problem?	Name one and how you’d find out.	Answer mentions asking people affected.

Before class

Prepare the case documents, one set per pair:

- ✓ Screening supply list, last Friday’s event
- ✓ Parts order with packaging, delivered Tuesday to the theatre shop
- ✓ City accepted-materials list, current sanitation guide (illustrative)
- ✓ Dec, 17, theatre crew

Every document is fictional case material, printable from the online field guide.

Questions to keep asking



Nexo

The packaging box started at the order form, not at the bin.



Lupa

The cup says “recyclable.” The city’s accepted-materials list is what counts.



Onda

Some people need a straw or a disposable cup. Keep an option for them.

Support every student, then assess

Success looks like

- ✓ Lists items and quantities
- ✓ Picks a reduction or reuse option
- ✓ Names a trade-off
- ✓ Includes a way to measure

Supports at this level

- Picture hierarchy
- Sheet template with the first row filled in
- Frames: “We use __. We could __. A problem might be __.”
- Group work

Access

- Use picture cards for the hierarchy
- Read the local recycling list aloud
- Spanish vocabulary: reducir, reutilizar, reciclar, desecho
- Offer a partially completed materials sheet
- Reduce to one item: cups

Stretch

- Find your city’s recycling rules and compare with a neighboring city
- Research where your area’s trash goes after pickup

Challenge: Explain how you’ll know if the change worked.

Rubric	Beginning	Developing	Proficient	Advanced
Evidence	No data.	General claims about recycling.	Uses quantities and local rules.	Uses quantities, local rules and a before/after plan.
Reasoning	Treats one fix as solving everything.	Ignores trade-offs.	Applies the hierarchy and names a trade-off.	Weights trade-offs including access and cost with a measurement boundary.
Audience & purpose	Commands people.	Relies on slogans.	Specific change organizers can do.	Specific, inclusive change with roles assigned.
Revision	No change.	Wording only.	Narrows to a measurable change.	Explains how narrowing makes success testable.

Standards this can show

RI.6.7 Common Core 6—8

W.7.7 Common Core 6—8

SL.8.4 Common Core 6—8

D2.Civ.13.6-8 C3 Framework

D4.6.9-12 C3 Framework

D4.7.6-8 C3 Framework



Case 14

Credit is not the whole copyright answer

If you credit the artist, can you use their track in your film?

Students remix music, clips and images every day, and many believe credit or “only ten seconds” makes any use okay. Understanding how U.S. copyright and fair use actually work lets creators share their projects without getting taken down, and respect other creators too.

In the real world

CrashCourse (YouTube), 2015 Copyright, Exceptions, and Fair Use: Crash Course Intellectual Property #3

NPR, 2023 Supreme Court sides against Andy Warhol Foundation in copyright infringement case

Caio

Calma, Mateo. The sample makes the scene, I know. But “we credited them” isn’t a reason I can explain. Let’s check the license first.

You’ll make

Rights log plus 3–4 sentences

Time

About 45 minutes

Level

Grades 6–8



The case file

Look at what's actually here before deciding what it means.

Fictional case material

1

Caio's rough cut, Friday 9:40 p.m. (edit timeline)

0:00—0:18 crew footage, no music. 0:18—0:38 sampled track, pitched up slightly, under the setup montage. 0:38—1:52 crew footage and interviews. 1:40—1:46 a 6-second clip downloaded from a stitched TikTok post.



Which parts of this cut did the crew not make? What is each borrowed element doing in the film?

Fictional case material

2

Mateo in the crew chat, Friday 10:02 p.m.

"We'll credit them in the caption. Post tonight?"



Which question does credit answer, and which doesn't it?

Fictional case material

3

"Calma, Mateo. The sample makes the scene, I know. But "we credited them" isn't a reason I can explain. Let's check the license first."

Caio, 24, editor and film-night organizer



What is Caio asking the crew to find before posting?

Fictional case material

4

Rights log template, started Saturday morning

Columns: element, who made it, where it came from, permission or license and date. Row 1: setup-montage music, the recording artist, a streaming download, permission unknown. Row 2: 6-second clip, a TikTok creator, downloaded from TikTok, permission unknown.



What goes in the permission column for each row, and where would you find it?

Outside the story

The case is fictional. The questions in it are not. Here is where they show up in the real world.

Still missing

Whether the track has any license that covers this use, which part of the song the 20 seconds come from, where the film will be shown, and what the TikTok creator agreed to when the clip was posted.

Real-world evidence



Real source

U.S. Copyright Office, Fair Use Index overview page

Summary, not a quotation: the Copyright Office explains that fair use is decided case by case with four factors (purpose and character of the use, nature of the copyrighted work, amount and substantiality of the portion used, and effect on the potential market), that no formula guarantees a set amount may be used without permission, and that even a small portion can weigh against fair use if it is the heart of the work.



Real source

U.S. Copyright Office, Fair Use Index summary of *Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc. v. Goldsmith* (2023)

Summary, not a quotation: the Supreme Court held that the first factor did not favor fair use for the specific licensing use at issue, because that use shared substantially the same purpose as the original photograph and was commercial; a new look or meaning alone did not settle the question.



video

Copyright, Exceptions, and Fair Use: Crash Course Intellectual Property #3

[CrashCourse \(YouTube\), 2015-05-07](#)

Explains why giving credit is not the same as permission, and how fair use is weighed.

Discuss before deciding

- Which item did you trust first, and why?
- What would you need to see before repeating the strongest claim?
- Who is missing from these documents?

What the evidence can hold up

Test the crew's two assumptions against the sources. Which evidence knocks each one down, and what single check could still make the plan work?

Evidence	Claim 1 Crediting the artist makes the use okay.	Claim 2 Twenty seconds is short enough to be fair use.
1 Credit names the creator but grants no permission	Challenges	—
2 Copyright Office: no formula makes a set amount safe; the heart of a work matters	—	Challenges
3 The sample is background mood, not commentary on the song	—	Challenges
4 Stitch permission applies inside TikTok, not to a downloaded clip in another film	Narrows	—

Still open

- Does any license cover this use? Check before posting.

Words that do the work

Copyright

Derechos de autor

U.S. legal protection that automatically covers original creative work once it's fixed, like recorded or written down.

The track Caio sampled is protected from the moment it was recorded, whether or not it's registered.

Attribution

Atribución

Naming or crediting the source.

Mateo's plan to "credit them" answers who made it. It doesn't answer whether the crew may use it.

License

Licencia

Permission to use a work under specific terms.

A Creative Commons or stock-music license could allow the use, if its terms fit this film.

One student's draft

Write a four-factor analysis of the crew's planned use and recommend a path.

Factor 1, purpose: We're using about 20 seconds of the song as background mood for our recap, not to comment on the song, so this factor probably weighs against fair use¹. Factor 2, nature of the work: The song is a creative recording, which also weighs against us. Factor 3, amount: 20 seconds is a small part, so this factor is fine because anything under 30 seconds is allowed². Factor 4, market effect: Using it for free as background music could replace a license the artist might sell³. Recommendation: Credit doesn't equal permission, and Stitch only works inside TikTok⁴, so we should swap in a licensed track or record our own before posting.

- 1 Accurate reading of purpose, with an honest "probably" instead of a verdict.
- 2 Revise: there is no safe number of seconds. The Copyright Office says no formula guarantees that a set amount may be used, and even a small portion can count against fair use if it is the heart of the work.
- 3 Strong: the writer connects market effect to how artists actually earn from music.
- 4 Good: platform permission is correctly limited to the platform.

Works well Uses evidence Gap to fix Think about the reader

One revision

Before

Factor 3, amount: ~~20 seconds is a small part, so this factor is fine because anything under 30 seconds is allowed.~~

After

Factor 3, amount: 20 seconds is a small part of the song, but the factor also weighs which part is used, and if it is the song's most recognizable hook, that could count against us.

The revision replaces a myth with the actual factor, which weighs both how much and which part is used.

Teacher commentary

The analysis applies all four factors, marks uncertainty and correctly limits platform permission, and its recommendation is practical. One sentence repeats the seconds myth the case exists to correct. Replacing it with the real amount-and-substantiality factor moves the analysis to Proficient on Evidence and Reasoning.

Teach it in one period

Grades 6—8

Make a rights log for the crew’s short film and suggest a way to use music they’re allowed to use.

Sources
The case scenario and a kid-friendly summary of the Copyright Office page.

Objective
Students inventory the outside material in a creative project and tell apart giving credit and having permission.

Product
Rights log plus 3—4 sentences

Assessed by
The teacher checks the rights log for every outside element and the sentences for the credit-versus-permission distinction and a realistic alternative.

45 minutes	You	Students	Check for
5 min The paused upload	Set the scene: Caio’s film recap uses a sample; Mateo wants to post tonight with a credit.	Vote: is credit enough? One reason.	Everyone commits to a position.
10 min Three questions	Distinguish attribution, permission and fair use.	Sort statements into the three categories.	“We’ll credit them” goes under attribution only.
10 min Four factors	Read the Copyright Office fair-use page together.	Apply each factor to the crew’s use, marking uncertainty.	Students avoid a guaranteed verdict.
7 min Myth check	Test “ten seconds is always fine” and “it’s for school.”	Find what the source says about each.	Students cite that there’s no fixed-length rule and education isn’t automatic.
10 min Rights log and alternative	Model a four-column rights log.	Complete the log and propose a licensed or original alternative.	Log is complete; alternative is realistic.
3 min Exit	Ask: what changes if the class draft becomes a public post?	Write one change.	Answer mentions audience, market or platform terms.

Before class

Prepare the case documents, one set per pair:

- ✓ Caio’s rough cut, Friday 9:40 p.m. (edit timeline)
- ✓ Mateo in the crew chat, Friday 10:02 p.m.
- ✓ Caio, 24, editor and film-night organizer
- ✓ Rights log template, started Saturday morning

Every document is fictional case material, printable from the online field guide.

Questions to keep asking

- **Pauta**
Credit answers “who made it.” Permission and fair use are separate questions.
- **Lupa**
The Copyright Office names four factors. It names no safe number of seconds.
- **Nexo**
Stitch permission works inside TikTok. A downloaded clip in a festival film is different.

Support every student, then assess

Success looks like

- ✓ Lists each outside element
- ✓ Separates credit from permission
- ✓ Suggests a realistic alternative
- ✓ Doesn't claim a guaranteed legal answer

Supports at this level

- Rights-log template: what, who made it, permission?
- Frames: "Credit tells people __. Permission means __."
- Vocabulary: copyright, credit, license
- List of free-to-use music libraries for school

Access

- Provide a three-box visual: credit / permission / fair use
- Read the Copyright Office summary aloud
- Spanish vocabulary: derechos de autor, licencia, atribución, uso justo
- Allow the rights log to be completed orally
- Reduce to one element: the music track

Stretch

- Compare Creative Commons license types and what each allows
- Research how your school's media policy handles copyrighted material

Challenge: Explain why "it's only ten seconds" isn't a rule.

Rubric	Beginning	Developing	Proficient	Advanced
Evidence	Relies on myths.	Cites credit as permission.	Uses the four factors or license terms.	Uses factors, license terms and platform differences.
Reasoning	Assumes any use is fine.	Applies one factor.	Separates credit, permission and fair use.	Weights factors honestly and chooses a lower-risk path.
Audience & purpose	Ignores the artist.	Considers only the crew.	Considers the artist and the audience.	Balances creative goals with respect for the original creator.
Revision	No change.	Adds a credit.	Replaces myths with a rights plan.	Explains each step and a realistic alternative.

Standards this can show

RI.7.4 Common Core 6—8

W.8.8 Common Core 6—8

SL.7.1 Common Core 6—8

D2.Civ.3.9-12 C3 Framework

D2.Civ.12.9-12 C3 Framework

D2.Civ.10.9-12 C3 Framework



Case 15

Internship, or someone's unpaid job?

When is an unpaid internship really a job that should be paid?

Internships open doors, but unpaid ones favor people who can afford to work for free, and some “internships” are just unpaid jobs. Knowing the questions the law asks helps students ages 16–24 evaluate an offer before they give it a summer.

In the real world

PBS NewsHour (YouTube), 2023 Why unpaid internships still exist despite hardships for young workers

NPR, 2013 Internships: Low-Paid, Unpaid Or Just Plain Illegal?

Rafa

Sige, I want the experience. I also work at the shop. So what would I actually learn, and who's teaching me?



You'll make

Sorted chart plus 3–4 sentences

Time

About 45 minutes

Level

Grades 6–8

The case file

Look at what's actually here before deciding what it means.

Fictional case material

1

Studio internship listing, posted on the campus job board in April

"Summer Editing Intern (unpaid). Join our fast-paced studio! You'll run the customer inbox all summer, help with client files and get great exposure to the industry. College credit available."



Which words describe learning, and which describe work? What does the listing leave out?

Fictional case material

2

Studio reply to Rafa, Tuesday 11:20 a.m.

"Thanks for your interest, Rafa! Since interns get college credit, it's totally legal for us not to pay. We'd love for you to start right after finals."



Is credit one factor or the whole test? What did the reply not answer?

Fictional case material

3

Gia and Rafa talking it through, Tuesday lunch

Gia: Didn't they pay someone to do the inbox last year?

Rafa: Yeah, their assistant.

Gia: And it's your summer, not theirs. What about your shifts at the shop?



Whose time and money does this offer spend? Which DOL factor does the first question connect to?

Fictional case material

4

"Sige, I want the experience. I also work at the shop. So what would I actually learn, and who's teaching me?"

Rafa, 18, first-year commuter who works at his family's shop



Turn Rafa's two questions into questions he could send the studio in writing.

Outside the story

The case is fictional. The questions in it are not. Here is where they show up in the real world.

Still missing

What training and supervision the studio actually provides, how many hours a week the role takes, whether Rafa's school will grant credit, and how many paid shifts at the family shop Rafa would give up.

Real-world evidence



Real source

U.S. Department of Labor, Wage and Hour Division, Fact Sheet #71: Internship Programs Under the Fair Labor Standards Act

Summary, not a quotation: for-profit employers use the "primary beneficiary test" to decide whether an intern is an employee who must be paid under the FLSA. The fact sheet lists seven factors, including whether the internship is tied to formal education or academic credit and whether the intern's work complements rather than displaces paid employees, and says the test is flexible with no single factor determinative.



video

Why unpaid internships still exist despite hardships for young workers

[PBS NewsHour \(YouTube\), 2023-08-26](#)

Reports that nearly half of U.S. interns were unpaid in 2022 and who can afford to take those jobs.



article

Internships: Low-Paid, Unpaid Or Just Plain Illegal?

[NPR, 2013-05-18](#)

Explains when an unpaid internship can break wage law, using the 'Black Swan' intern lawsuit.

Discuss before deciding

- Which item did you trust first, and why?
- What would you need to see before repeating the strongest claim?
- Who is missing from these documents?

What the evidence can hold up

Test the studio’s claim against the factor list. Which evidence points toward training, which toward a job, and what is still unknown?

Evidence	Claim 1 College credit makes the unpaid internship legal.	Claim 2 The role looks more like a job than training.
1 DOL: credit is one of seven factors, and no single factor decides	Challenges	—
2 The listing: Rafa runs the customer inbox all summer	—	Supports
3 A paid assistant ran the inbox last year	—	Supports
4 The role is openly unpaid and offers credit (factors 1 and 3)	—	Challenges

Still open

- Is there a learning plan, and who supervises?

Words that do the work

Primary beneficiary test

Prueba del beneficiario principal

The Department of Labor’s test asking whether the intern or the company mainly benefits from an unpaid internship at a for-profit employer.

The studio gets its inbox answered all summer. Rafa asks what he gets beyond “exposure.”

Fair Labor Standards Act

Ley de Normas Justas de Trabajo

The federal law setting minimum wage and overtime for covered employees.

If Rafa counts as an employee under the FLSA, he must be paid at least minimum wage.

Displacement

Desplazamiento

When an intern does work that a paid employee would otherwise do.

Rafa’s role covers the inbox a paid assistant ran last year.

One student's draft

Turn the seven DOL factors into an internship questions sheet, fill it in with the studio's answers and write a 150-word summary.

Summary: Using the seven factors, Rafa's internship looks more like a job than training. The studio says it's unpaid and gives college credit, so factors 1 and 3 point toward an internship¹. But the listing says Rafa would run the customer inbox all summer, and a paid assistant did that job last year, so factor 6 points toward a job² because he would be replacing a worker. We don't know about training or supervision because the studio didn't answer that question.³ Since the studio says credit makes it legal, and credit is one of the factors, the internship is probably legal.⁴ Rafa should ask for a written learning plan and the weekly hours before he decides.

- 1 Accurate and fair: the writer credits the evidence that cuts the other way instead of ignoring it.
- 2 Strong: specific evidence tied to the displacement factor.
- 3 Good: unknowns are marked as unknown rather than guessed.
- 4 Revise: this repeats the studio's claim and contradicts the summary's own reasoning. No single factor decides the test, and the displacement evidence points the other way.

Works well Uses evidence Gap to fix Think about the reader

One revision

Before

~~Since the studio says credit makes it legal, and credit is one of the factors, the internship is probably legal.~~

After

Credit is only one factor, and no single factor decides the test, so the studio's answer doesn't settle it.

The revision matches the conclusion to the flexible test and to the writer's own evidence instead of adopting the employer's claim.

Teacher commentary

The summary weighs factors in both directions, ties the displacement factor to specific evidence and marks unknowns honestly. One sentence then adopts the studio's claim that credit settles the question, contradicting the rest of the analysis. Removing that verdict moves the response to Proficient on Reasoning, and completing the remaining factors on the sheet finishes the task.

Teach it in one period

Grades 6—8

Sort the internship’s daily tasks into “learning” and “working,” then tell a partner whether it looks more like school or a job.

Sources

The listing and a kid-friendly summary of the seven factors.

Product

Sorted chart plus 3—4 sentences

Objective

Students separate learning from working in a job description and form a question to ask before accepting an unpaid role.

Assessed by

The teacher checks the sort for accuracy and the sentences for a reason and a useful question, with no legal verdict.

45 minutes	You	Students	Check for
5 min The offer	Read the studio listing: unpaid, run the customer inbox all summer, college credit, “great exposure.”	Underline what you would do each day.	Students find that duties are mostly inbox work.
10 min The seven factors	Read DOL Fact Sheet 71’s factors aloud in plain language.	Rewrite each factor as a question Rafa could ask.	Seven questions, one per factor.
10 min Apply them	Provide the studio’s answers to some questions; leave others blank.	Mark each factor: points toward training, toward job, or unknown.	Students leave unknowns as unknowns.
10 min The life around the offer	Share Gia’s point about time, rent and the family shop.	List Rafa’s practical costs.	Costs include lost paid hours and transport.
7 min Write to the studio	Model a respectful clarifying email.	Draft Rafa’s email asking for the learning plan and supervision.	Email asks specific questions without accusing.
3 min Exit	Ask: which single fact would most change your view?	Write it.	Answer names a factor like displacement or training.

Before class

Prepare the case documents, one set per pair:

- ✓ Studio internship listing, posted on the campus job board in April
- ✓ Studio reply to Rafa, Tuesday 11:20 a.m.
- ✓ Gia and Rafa talking it through, Tuesday lunch
- ✓ Rafa, 18, first-year commuter who works at his family’s shop

Questions to keep asking



Pauta

DOL lists seven factors. No single one, not even credit, decides the answer.



Lupa

The listing says “run the customer inbox.” That’s the work. Where’s the training?

Support every student, then assess

Success looks like

- ✓ Sorts tasks accurately
- ✓ Gives a reason
- ✓ Asks a useful question
- ✓ Doesn't declare it illegal

Supports at this level

- Task cards to sort
- Frames: "Most of the tasks are __, so __."
- Vocabulary: intern, employee, wage, training
- Discussion first

Access

- Provide factor cards with icons and one-line explanations
- Read the listing aloud
- Spanish vocabulary: pasantía, empleado, salario, capacitación
- Offer a partially completed questions sheet
- Reduce to three factors: training, credit, displacement

Stretch

- Look up whether your state has its own internship or minimum-wage rules
- Compare the for-profit test with guidance for volunteering at nonprofits

Challenge: Name one question Rafa should ask before saying yes.

Rubric	Beginning	Developing	Proficient	Advanced
Evidence	Relies on rumor.	Mentions pay only.	Asks about several factors.	Asks about factors and notes what the credit claim doesn't settle.
Reasoning	Declares legal or illegal.	Asks for a verdict.	Gathers facts before deciding.	Connects each question to a reason it matters.
Audience & purpose	Gives away leverage or accuses.	Polite but vague.	Specific, respectful questions.	Specific questions plus Rafa's own constraints.
Revision	No change.	Tone only.	Replaces rumor with factor-based questions.	Explains how each question helps Rafa decide.

Standards this can show

RI.8.1 Common Core 6–8

RH.6–8.8 Common Core 6–8

W.8.1 Common Core 6–8

D2.Civ.12.9–12 C3 Framework

D2.Civ.13.9–12 C3 Framework

D2.Civ.6.9–12 C3 Framework



Case 16

“It’s our policy” is not the end

When a new building rule appears, who wrote it and who does it affect?

Housing rules decide whether people can work, gather and get in and out of their own homes, and renters often have less power than whoever posts the notice. Asking who issued a rule and how it lands on different residents is how neighbors protect each other without spreading rumors.

In the real world

Gothamist, 2019 Brooklyn Landlord Does An About Face On Facial Recognition Plan

HUD (YouTube), 2014 The Federal Fair Housing Act and Reasonable Accommodations

Sami

I’m not canceling my workshop over an unsigned notice. I’m also not ignoring it. Who wrote it, and how do I get in after eight?

You’ll make

Rewritten notice, 60–90 words

Time

About 45 minutes

Level

Grades 6–8



The case file

Look at what's actually here before deciding what it means.

Fictional case material

1

§ Unsigned notice beside the common-room door, found Monday morning

"NOTICE TO ALL RESIDENTS. Effective immediately, the rear door will be locked at 8:00 p.m. nightly. The common room is for resident social use only. NO BUSINESS USE." No issuer, date or contact appears on the page.



Who wrote this, and how would you find out? Which features make it sound official?

Fictional case material

2

§ Building house rules, last year's version, distributed at lease signing (illustrative excerpt)

"Residents may reserve the common room for gatherings, classes and resident-run workshops. Reservations are made through the building office."



What did the old rule say about resident workshops? Does the new notice say it replaces this?

Fictional case material

3

Building entrance plan from the lobby directory

Front entrance: four steps, no ramp. Rear door: step-free, opens to the elevator hallway. Side door: service use only.



Which entrance is step-free, and what happens to it after 8 p.m. under the notice?

Fictional case material

4

"Rear door locked at 8. That's the only door I can get through. My workshop runs later. So, questions. Plural."

Sami, 23, lives in 3B and runs a workshop in the common room



Which two questions does Sami need answered, and who can answer each?

Fictional case material

5

"All caps, bold, no name, no date. That's a design choice. It isn't authority."

Caio, 24, reading last year's house rules beside the notice

What would count as proof of authority for a building rule?

Outside the story

The case is fictional. The questions in it are not. Here is where they show up in the real world.

Still missing

Who issued the notice and why, whether it replaces or adds to the house rules, what Sami's lease says, whether there has been a security problem at the rear door, and how the building handles accommodation requests.

Real-world evidence



Real source

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Fair Housing Act overview

Summary, not a quotation: HUD's overview lists the characteristics the Fair Housing Act protects (race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status and disability) and says housing discrimination is illegal in nearly all housing, including private, public and federally funded housing.

article

Brooklyn Landlord Does An About Face On Facial Recognition Plan

[Gothamist,](#)
2019-11-21

A throwback about a door rule: the landlord needed state permission to change how tenants got in, and tenants used that process to object.

Discuss before deciding

- Which item did you trust first, and why?
- What would you need to see before repeating the strongest claim?
- Who is missing from these documents?

Who actually gets to decide?

Map who made this rule, which rules it has to fit, who it affects and where residents can take a question. Which box is still empty?

Lock the rear door at 8 p.m. and ban business use of the common room

Who decides

Unknown issuer: the owner, the manager or someone else?

Under which rule

Last year's house rules allowed resident-run workshops
Fair Housing Act: disability is a protected characteristic

Who lives with it

Sami and other residents who need the only step-free entrance

Your way in

A local tenant or housing help line, or HUD for a fair-housing concern

Words that do the work

Housing as a need

La vivienda como necesidad

Stable, safe housing affects health, school and work, which is why governments make rules about it.

Sami's building is also where she runs her workshop calendar. A rule change changes her week.

Authority

Autoridad

The power to make or enforce a particular rule, and where that power comes from.

The notice has bold type but no issuer. Caio says design isn't proof of authority.

Jurisdiction

Jurisdicción

Which laws and bodies apply to a particular place or situation.

A rule from another city can be a comparison but can't stand in for the rules that apply here.

One student’s draft

Write Sami’s message to the building manager asking about the rule and requesting access after 8 p.m.

Hi, I’m Sami in 3B. On Monday I saw a new notice by the common-room door. It says the rear door will be locked after 8 p.m. and that business use of the room is banned. ¹ I use a wheelchair, and the rear door is the building’s only step-free entrance ². If it’s locked, I can’t get into my own building at night. This notice is illegal under the Fair Housing Act, so please take it down. ³ Also, who issued the notice, and does it replace last year’s house rules, which allowed resident workshops? ⁴ Thank you, Sami

- 1 Accurate summary of the notice, so the manager can see exactly which parts Sami means.
- 2 Strong: a concrete, checkable fact about access, taken from the entrance plan.
- 3 Revise: the facts don’t establish a violation yet, and removing the notice wouldn’t guarantee Sami’s access. Ask for an accommodation instead.
- 4 Good question about authority: it points to a specific document the manager can check.

Works well Uses evidence Gap to fix Think about the reader

One revision

Before

~~This notice is illegal under the Fair Housing Act, so please take it down.~~

After

I’d like to request an accommodation so I can get in after 8, such as a key fob for the rear door.

A specific accommodation request is something the manager can say yes to, and it keeps the legal question open instead of declaring an answer.

Teacher commentary

The message quotes the notice accurately, states a concrete access need and asks the right question about authority. The one legal conclusion undercuts it: it accuses before asking and requests something that would not guarantee access. Swapping it for a specific accommodation request moves the message to Proficient on Reasoning and Audience.

Teach it in one period

Grades 6—8

Rewrite the building notice so every resident knows who wrote it, what changed, when and who to ask.

Sources
The notice and a short excerpt from the older house rules.

Objective
Students identify what a notice leaves out and rewrite it so every resident, including those who need step-free access, knows what changed and whom to ask.

Product
Rewritten notice, 60—90 words

Assessed by
The teacher checks the rewrite against the four success criteria, paying particular attention to the line about step-free access after 8 p.m.

45 minutes	You	Students	Check for
5 min Read the notice	Project the notice. Ask: who wrote this?	List what the notice tells you and what it doesn’t.	Lists include missing issuer, date and contact.
10 min Compare the documents	Hand out the older house rules excerpt.	Mark what changed and whether the notice claims to replace the older rule.	Students identify the new 8 p.m. rear-door lock and business-use ban.
10 min Map the effects	Draw a people map: Sami, other residents, guests, the manager.	Add how each person is affected and what each needs.	Map includes step-free access and workshop use.
10 min The legal layer	Introduce the Fair Housing Act and reasonable accommodation as questions, not conclusions.	Write one question about access and one about authority.	Questions don’t declare a violation.
7 min Rewrite or respond	Offer two options: rewrite the notice fairly, or write Sami’s question to the manager.	Draft 60—100 words.	Draft includes issuer, scope and contact, or a precise question.
3 min Exit	Frame: “One fact that would change my view is __.”	Complete the frame.	Answer names a missing document or fact.

Before class

- Prepare the case documents, one set per pair:
- ✓ Unsigned notice beside the common-room door, found Monday morning
 - ✓ Building house rules, last year’s version, distributed at lease signing (illustrative excerpt)
 - ✓ Building entrance plan from the lobby directory
 - ✓ Sami, 23, lives in 3B and runs a workshop in the common room

Questions to keep asking

- **Pauta**
No issuer, no date, no contact. Bold type isn’t authority.
- **Onda**
Locking the rear door at 8 p.m. closes the building’s only step-free entrance for Sami.

Support every student, then assess

Success looks like

- ✓ Names who issued it
- ✓ States what changed and when
- ✓ Gives a contact
- ✓ Considers residents who need step-free access

Supports at this level

- Checklist: who, what, when, who it affects, who to ask
- Word bank: resident, policy, effective date, contact
- Model of a clear school notice
- Pair work

Access

- Provide the notice and older rule side by side with changes highlighted
- Read HUD’s overview summary aloud
- Spanish vocabulary: aviso, inquilino, administrador, ajuste razonable
- Offer a fill-in message template
- Reduce to the rewrite-the-notice task only

Stretch

- Research what local tenant organizations exist in your area and what they offer
- Compare federal fair-housing protections with your state’s list of protected characteristics

Challenge: Add one line about how residents who need the step-free door can get in after 8 p.m.

Rubric	Beginning	Developing	Proficient	Advanced
Evidence	No specifics from the notice.	Mentions the notice generally.	Quotes the notice and older rule.	Quotes both and names what is still unknown.
Reasoning	Declares a legal violation.	Complains without a clear need.	Connects the rule to a concrete effect.	Separates the communication problem from the legal question.
Audience & purpose	Hostile or vague.	Polite but no request.	Specific request the manager can act on.	Specific request plus questions that clarify authority.
Revision	No change.	Tone edits only.	Replaces the conclusion with a question and request.	Explains how each change makes a yes more likely.

Standards this can show

RI.8.8 Common Core 6—8

RH.6-8.6 Common Core 6—8

W.7.1 Common Core 6—8

D2.Civ.6.9-12 C3 Framework

D2.Civ.12.9-12 C3 Framework

D2.Civ.13.9-12 C3 Framework



Case 17

A good choice for whom?

Ten free seats, thirty people who want one. How should the crew decide?

Clubs, schools and governments constantly decide who gets limited seats, money or time, and every method helps some people and costs others. Students who can name the trade-off out loud make fairer decisions and can challenge unfair ones without pretending there's a perfect answer.

In the real world

NPR, 2020 The Ethics Of Who Gets The COVID-19 Vaccine And When

Scientific American, 2020 How to Decide Who Should Get a COVID-19 Vaccine First

Anika

I'm not asking the plan to revolve around me. I'm asking you to count the cost instead of saying nobody loses.



You'll make

Note, 4—6 sentences

Time

About 45 minutes

Level

Grades 6—8

The case file

Look at what's actually here before deciding what it means.

Fictional case material

1

§ Workshop sign-up sheet, opened Monday 9 a.m.

"Free workshop: 10 seats. Add your name to show interest. How seats will be chosen: to be announced." Thirty names by Wednesday; the first 22 were added before 10 a.m. on Monday.



Who saw this first, and who might have seen it late? What would first-come, first-served mean for these thirty names?

Fictional case material

2

Crew dinner debate thread, Sunday 8:30 p.m.

Gia: first come is easiest to run, we just take the top ten.

Anika: I'm at rehearsal most days, I'd see it after it's full.

Mateo: lottery?

Gia: then we need a sign-up window and someone to run the drawing.



Which cost does each person mention, and which costs does nobody mention?

Fictional case material

3

Three selection options on the whiteboard, Sunday night

A. First come, first served: fast to run; favors whoever sees it first. B. Lottery after a three-day sign-up: equal chance for everyone; needs a sign-up window and a drawing. C. Needs-based rubric: prioritizes people who can't afford the paid version; needs personal information and someone to judge it.



Which option does each ethical lens favor? Which option asks applicants to give up the most privacy?

Fictional case material

4

"No. I want the group to count the effect instead of saying nobody loses. Then we can look for an adjustment."

Anika, 16, balancing rehearsal and getting home



What is Anika asking for, and what is she explicitly not asking for?

Outside the story

The case is fictional. The questions in it are not. Here is where they show up in the real world.

Still missing

How many of the thirty applicants have the greatest need, whether a second session is possible, who would see personal information under a needs-based rubric, and how the twenty people without seats would like to be told.

Real-world evidence



Real source

Markkula Center for Applied Ethics, Santa Clara University, A Framework for Ethical Decision Making

Summary, not a quotation: the framework suggests examining a decision through several ethical lenses, such as its consequences, the rights it respects, whether it treats people justly, the common good, virtue and care, and notes that the lenses can point in different directions.



article

The Ethics Of Who Gets The COVID-19 Vaccine And When

[NPR, 2020-12-20](#)

A bioethicist explains how leaders chose who went first when there wasn't enough for everyone.



article

How to Decide Who Should Get a COVID-19 Vaccine First

[Scientific American, 2020-09-03](#)

Lays out competing criteria such as risk, fairness and benefit, the same lenses the crew uses.

Discuss before deciding

- Which item did you trust first, and why?
- What would you need to see before repeating the strongest claim?
- Who is missing from these documents?

If this, then what?

Follow each method to its consequences. Who carries the cost under each one, and what makes the chosen process legitimate to the twenty who lose?

First come, first served

The ten fastest responders get seats; people at rehearsal or work see the sign-up late

Anika and others who check messages late

Lottery after a three-day sign-up

Each of the thirty has the same chance, and need is not considered

Needs-based rubric

Those with the greatest need are prioritized; applicants must share personal information

Applicants asked to disclose their finances

Words that do the work

Ethical lens

Perspectiva ética

A way of examining a decision, like its consequences, fairness, rights or care for people involved.

Gia looks at how many people get in. Anika looks at whether the process is fair to people who can't stay late.

Trade-off

Tensión entre opciones

A choice where helping one goal limits another.

First-come is quick for Gia to run but favors whoever sees the message first. A lottery is fairer to Anika but needs a sign-up period.

Equality

Igualdad

Treating everyone the same way, like giving each person an equal chance.

A lottery gives all thirty people the same chance at a seat.

One student's draft

Write a 150-word decision note defending one option, its strongest objection and one revision, using two ethical lenses.

We should use a lottery after a three-day sign-up. Looking at fairness, a lottery gives all thirty people the same chance¹, while first-come, first-served rewards whoever sees the message first, which is unfair to people like Anika who can't check their phones during rehearsal². Looking at consequences, a lottery also makes the most people happy, because everyone will feel they had a fair shot³. The strongest objection is that a lottery ignores need: someone who can't afford the paid version of the workshop has the same chance as someone who can⁴. To reduce that cost, we will run a second free session for the twenty people who don't get in. We would rethink this if we can't actually run a second session.

- 1 Accurate use of the fairness lens: it names exactly what the method treats equally.
- 2 Strong: a concrete cost of the alternative, tied to a person in the case.
- 3 Revise: this guesses at feelings. Under the consequences lens, a lottery still leaves twenty people without seats, so name the outcomes it actually produces.
- 4 Good: the writer states the strongest objection at full strength instead of a weak version.

Works well Uses evidence Gap to fix Think about the reader

One revision

Before

~~Looking at consequences, a lottery also makes the most people happy, because everyone will feel they had a fair shot.~~

After

Looking at consequences, every method seats exactly ten people, so the real difference is which ten; a lottery spreads the chance evenly but does nothing extra for those with the greatest need.

The revision applies the consequences lens to actual outcomes rather than predicted feelings, and it sets up the objection that follows.

Teacher commentary

The note chooses clearly, uses the fairness lens precisely and states a strong objection with a realistic revision and a condition for reconsidering. Its consequences lens rests on a guess about how people will feel. Grounding that lens in actual outcomes moves the note from Proficient to Advanced on Reasoning.

Teach it in one period

Grades 6—8

Hold a small-group discussion, then write a short note to the thirty students explaining how the ten seats will be given out.

Sources

The three options and Gia and Anika’s perspectives.

Objective

Students see that every way of sharing a limited resource helps some people and costs others, and explain a choice honestly to those affected.

Product

Note, 4—6 sentences

Assessed by

The teacher checks the note for a method, a reason, a named cost and one fix, and observes whether each student speaks in the group discussion.

45 minutes	You	Students	Check for
5 min The problem	Present ten seats, thirty sign-ups, and Anika’s note that she can’t stay late.	Write your gut answer and one reason.	Everyone has a position before discussion.
10 min Three options	Describe first-come, lottery and needs-based rubric.	For each, list who gains and who carries the cost.	Each option has at least one named cost.
10 min Two lenses	Introduce consequences and fairness lenses (Markkula Center).	Apply both lenses to your preferred option.	Students find a cost in their own preference.
12 min Decision note	Model a 150-word note: choice, reason, strongest objection, revision.	Write the note.	Note includes an objection and a revision.
5 min Hear the cost	Pairs read notes aloud to someone who prefers a different option.	Listener names one thing the note missed.	Each writer receives one specific challenge.
3 min Exit	Frame: “I would reconsider if __.”	Complete the frame.	Condition is concrete and checkable.

Before class

Prepare the case documents, one set per pair:

- ✓ Workshop sign-up sheet, opened Monday 9 a.m.
- ✓ Crew dinner debate thread, Sunday 8:30 p.m.
- ✓ Three selection options on the whiteboard, Sunday night
- ✓ Anika, 16, balancing rehearsal and getting home

Every document is fictional case material, printable from the online field guide.

Questions to keep asking



Onda

First-come favors people who see the message first. Anika checks her phone after rehearsal.



Pauta

Publish the rule before sign-ups open, not after you see who applied.



Duda

Which part of your reasoning is doing the most work?

Support every student, then assess

Success looks like

- ✓ Explains the method clearly
- ✓ Gives a reason
- ✓ Names who it's harder for
- ✓ Offers one fix

Supports at this level

- Who-gains / who-pays chart
- Frames: "We chose __ because __. This is hard for __."
- Discussion roles: facilitator, recorder, questioner
- Vocabulary: fair, equal, need

Access

- Provide the three options as picture cards
- Read Markkula lenses aloud with one-line summaries
- Spanish vocabulary: justo, igualdad, equidad, sorteo
- Allow oral decision notes
- Reduce to comparing two options

Stretch

- Research how a real program uses a lottery and what critics say
- Design a hybrid method and test it against all three lenses

Challenge: Add one change that reduces the cost for people who won't get a seat.

Rubric	Beginning	Developing	Proficient	Advanced
Evidence	No reference to who is affected.	Mentions people vaguely.	Names specific people and effects from the case.	Uses case facts to show who gains and who pays.
Reasoning	Claims an option is obviously best.	Gives one reason only.	Uses a lens and names the strongest objection.	Uses two lenses and proposes a revision tied to the objection.
Audience & purpose	Ignores the twenty who miss out.	Mentions them briefly.	Explains the process to all applicants.	Builds legitimacy by publishing criteria and a remedy.
Revision	No change.	Wording only.	Adds a named cost and revision.	Explains how the revision addresses the objection.

Standards this can show

SL.7.1 Common Core 6—8

W.7.1 Common Core 6—8

SL.6.1 Common Core 6—8

D2.Civ.7.6-8 C3 Framework

D2.Civ.10.6-8 C3 Framework

D2.Civ.9.9-12 C3 Framework



Case 18

Follow the school money

The district budget is huge. Why is the theatre curtain still falling apart?

School budgets decide which rooms get repaired, which programs survive and how many adults are in the building, and students are rarely told where to ask. Learning to read a budget's year, stage and units turns "where did the money go?" into a question a school board can actually answer.

In the real world

NPR, 2016 Why America's Schools Have A Money Problem

Chalkbeat, 2026 A financial reckoning is hitting America's public schools

Mari

Ay, bendito, that curtain. Okay, before we get mad at the big number, which line is supposed to fix it?

You'll make

Source card plus a 2—3 sentence question

Time

About 45 minutes

Level

Grades 6—8



The case file

Look at what's actually here before deciding what it means.

Fictional case material

1

District proposed budget, facilities excerpt, posted in spring for next school year

PROPOSED BUDGET, NEXT SCHOOL YEAR. Total proposed budget: \$48,000,000. Projected enrollment: 3,200 students. Facilities, building repairs (all schools): \$310,000. Note: figures are proposed and may change before the board adopts the budget.



Is this a plan or what was actually spent? Which line might cover a stage curtain?

Fictional case material

2

Social post comparing two districts, shared Tuesday 6:10 p.m.

"Our district: \$48 MILLION. Westbrook: \$21,000 per student. And they can't fix ONE curtain?? Where is the money going?"



Which figure is a total and which is per student? What would you need to compare them fairly?

Fictional case material

3

Facilities repair quote issued to the theatre advisor

Stage curtain replacement, main auditorium: remove the torn curtain, supply and install a flame-retardant replacement. Total: \$6,800.



Which budget line would pay this, and who would decide whether it is ranked ahead of other repairs?

Fictional case material

4

"Forty-eight million dollars, and the curtain still won't close. Ay, bendito. I want to ask about that without pretending the total answers it."

Mari, 19, helping younger neighbors prepare a budget question



What connection does Mari want to ask about, and why doesn't the total answer it?

Fictional case material

5

"I pull that curtain every show. It doesn't close all the way anymore. That part I can show you."

Dec, 17, theatre crew, pulls the curtain every show

What can a photo prove here, and what caption would claim too much?

Outside the story

The case is fictional. The questions in it are not. Here is where they show up in the real world.

Still missing

Whether stage equipment falls under the building-repairs line or another one, how the district ranks repair requests, Westbrook's budget year and stage, and what the board finally adopts after public comment.

Real-world evidence



Real source

National Center for Education Statistics, Condition of Education: Public School Revenue Sources

Summary, not a quotation: NCES reports public school revenue by federal, state and local source, and its data show that the mix of sources differs from state to state.



article

Why America's Schools Have A Money Problem

[NPR, 2016-04-18](#)

Explains how local property taxes make school budgets very different from one district to the next.



article

A financial reckoning is hitting America's public schools

[Chalkbeat, 2026-05-28](#)

Big districts are making cuts, showing how a huge budget can still leave little for extras like a stage curtain.

Discuss before deciding

- Which item did you trust first, and why?
- What would you need to see before repeating the strongest claim?
- Who is missing from these documents?

Who actually gets to decide?

Trace the curtain request from the photo to the vote. Who ranks it, who adopts the budget, which rules limit them, and where can students speak?

Fund the \$6,800 curtain replacement next year

Who decides

The elected local school board, which adopts the budget

The facilities office, which ranks repair requests (how is still unknown)

Under which rule

State and federal rules and funding streams set limits on district budgets

Proposed building-repairs line: \$310,000 for all schools

Who lives with it

Your way in

A written question or public comment before the budget is adopted

Words that do the work

Revenue sources

Fuentes de ingresos

Where school money comes from: federal, state and local sources, in a mix that varies by place.

The NCES table shows the mix differs by state. It can't tell Mari what her district spends on curtains.

Budget stages

Etapas del presupuesto

A proposed budget is a plan, an adopted budget is approved, and actual spending is what happened.

The document the crew found is the proposed budget for next year, not this year's actual spending.

Per-pupil amount

Cantidad por estudiante

Money divided by the number of students, so places of different sizes can be compared.

A post compares one district's total with another's per-pupil figure. Those units don't match.

One student's draft

Correct a misleading social post that compares mismatched budget figures, then write a better comparison with a worked calculation.

Correction: A post going around says our district has \$48 million and Westbrook spends \$21,000 per student, so we're being shortchanged. Those numbers can't be compared. ¹ The \$48 million is our district's total proposed budget for next year, and the Westbrook number is per student. To compare fairly, divide our total by our projected enrollment: $\$48,000,000 \div 3,200 \text{ students} = \$15,000 \text{ per student}$ ². So our district spends less per student, which proves we are underfunded ³. We also need to check that both numbers are for the same year and the same stage ⁴, proposed or adopted. Source: district proposed budget, next school year.

- 1 Clear diagnosis stated up front, before any math.
- 2 Correct calculation that turns the total into a comparable unit, with the work shown.
- 3 Revise: per-pupil figures cannot settle adequacy on their own. Costs, student needs and budget categories differ between districts, and a proposed budget is not spending.
- 4 Strong: the writer names the remaining conditions for a fair comparison.

Works well Uses evidence Gap to fix Think about the reader

One revision

Before

~~So our district spends less per student, which proves we are underfunded.~~

After

So our district's proposed budget works out to less per student than Westbrook's figure, but that alone can't tell us whether either district has enough for its students' needs.

The revision keeps the useful comparison while separating what the numbers show from a conclusion about adequacy they cannot support.

Teacher commentary

The correction diagnoses the unit mismatch immediately and shows a correct per-pupil calculation, which is the core of the task. It then overreaches, treating one comparison as proof of underfunding and calling a proposed budget spending. Qualifying the conclusion moves it from Developing to Proficient on Reasoning, and noting that Westbrook's year and stage are unknown would reach Advanced.

Teach it in one period

Grades 6—8

Make a source card for the district budget and write one question the theatre crew could bring to the school board.

Sources

A one-page budget excerpt with the facilities line and a photo of the curtain.

Objective

Students label a budget document’s year, stage and units and connect an observed need to a specific line and a question for the board.

Product

Source card plus a 2—3 sentence question

Assessed by

The teacher checks the source-card labels and the question against the four success criteria.

45 minutes	You	Students	Check for
5 min The curtain	Show Mateo’s photo of the curtain (with permission) and the district’s total budget.	Write the question the photo raises and the question the total raises.	Students notice the two questions aren’t the same.
10 min Label the number	Hand out the budget excerpt. Teach year, stage and units.	Label the excerpt: which year, proposed or adopted, total or per pupil?	Labels identify “proposed, next year, total.”
10 min Fix the comparison	Show the social post comparing a total with a per-pupil figure.	Explain the mismatch and what you’d need to compare fairly.	Students name matching units, year and category.
8 min Who decides?	Map federal, state and local roles; explain equity vs. adequacy.	Place the curtain request on the map: which level, which line, which body?	Map points to the local board and a facilities line.
9 min Write the question	Model a one-line budget question.	Draft a question and a 60-second comment for the board.	Question names a line, a need and a request.
3 min Exit	Ask: what could make spending rise without improving a service?	Write one possibility.	Answers include cost increases or different categories.

Before class

Prepare the case documents, one set per pair:

- ✓ District proposed budget, facilities excerpt, posted in spring for next school year
- ✓ Social post comparing two districts, shared Tuesday 6:10 p.m.
- ✓ Facilities repair quote issued to the theatre advisor
- ✓ Mari, 19, helping younger neighbors prepare a budget question

Questions to keep asking



Lupa
“Proposed, next year” is printed at the top. That’s not what was spent this year.



Duda
Total or per pupil? The post compares one of each.

Support every student, then assess

Success looks like

- ✓ Labels year, stage and units correctly
- ✓ Connects the curtain to a specific line
- ✓ Asks a question the board can answer
- ✓ Doesn't accuse anyone of wasting money

Supports at this level

- Source-card template: year, stage, units, line
- Frames: "The budget says __. We noticed __. Could the board explain __?"
- Vocabulary: revenue, expenditure, per pupil
- Worked example

Access

- Provide a pre-labeled budget excerpt with one line highlighted
- Use a calculator and a worked per-pupil example
- Spanish vocabulary: presupuesto, ingresos, gasto, por estudiante
- Read the budget notes aloud
- Reduce to the source-card task

Stretch

- Find your own district's adopted budget and locate the facilities or capital line
- Compare two years of the same line and explain what might explain a change

Challenge: Explain why the district total alone can't tell you whether there's money for the curtain.

Rubric	Beginning	Developing	Proficient	Advanced
Evidence	Uses an unlabeled total.	Uses a figure without year or stage.	Labels year, stage and line and cites the need.	Adds a repair quote and notes what the figures can't show.
Reasoning	Assumes waste or theft.	Compares mismatched numbers.	Links the need to a specific budget line.	Explains process questions: ranking, timing, decision-maker.
Audience & purpose	Accuses the board.	Complains without a request.	Asks a question the board can answer.	Asks a question and offers a concrete way for students to contribute.
Revision	No change.	Removes insults only.	Adds labels and a specific line.	Explains how each change makes an answer more likely.

Standards this can show

RI.6.7 Common Core 6—8

RH.6-8.7 Common Core 6—8

SL.6.4 Common Core 6—8

D2.Civ.4.6-8 C3 Framework

D2.Civ.11.9-12 C3 Framework

D2.Civ.13.9-12 C3 Framework



Case 19

Give your comment a destination

How do you make a public comment that actually lands?

City councils, school boards and agencies make decisions about parks, buses and schools in meetings anyone can attend, but most people never find the agenda. A short, specific comment in the right place can be one of the most direct ways a young person, including one too young to vote, takes part in local government.

In the real world

Chalkbeat Philadelphia, 2026 'Not what democracy is all about': Philly students slam school leaders' approach to school closures

Chalkbeat Newark, 2025 How a Newark student coalition is using its own research to press for change in schools

You'll make

60-second comment (about 130 words)

Time

About 45 minutes

Level

Grades 6—8

Gia

I wrote three pages. The limit is two minutes. Okay: item four, what I saw, why it matters, what I'm asking. Time me.



The case file

Look at what's actually here before deciding what it means.

Fictional case material

1

§ Parks committee agenda, Tuesday 6 p.m., item 4

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.



Is this item for discussion or a vote? What can this committee do, and what can it not do?

Fictional case material

2

§ Public comment instructions posted with the agenda

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.



What is the time limit, can you comment in writing, and what does "public record" mean for what you include?

Fictional case material

3

Gia's three-page draft, Monday night (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."



Which sentence is her actual request, and is it accurate about what item 4 proposes?

Fictional case material

4

"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."

Written comment from a nearby resident, submitted before the meeting (illustrative)



What does this resident need, and could Gia's request respond to it?

Fictional case material

5

"What is the one thing you want them to answer?"

Mateo, 22, helping Gia prepare

Answer Mateo's question for Gia in one sentence.

Outside the story

The case is fictional. The questions in it are not. Here is where they show up in the real world.

Still missing

How many residents have complained and when the noise occurs, whether any compromise hours were considered, how the full council usually treats committee recommendations, and the views of court users who cannot attend a 6 p.m. meeting.

Real-world evidence



Real source

Seattle City Council, Public Comment

Summary, not a quotation: the page describes hybrid comment in person or by phone, registration before the meeting, up to 2 minutes per speaker, written comments by email, and comment on items on the agenda and within the committee's purview.



article

'Not what democracy is all about': Philly students slam school leaders' approach to school closures [Chalkbeat Philadelphia, 2026-04-03](#)

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



article

How a Newark student coalition is using its own research to press for change in schools [Chalkbeat Newark, 2025-11-26](#)

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

Discuss before deciding

- Which item did you trust first, and why?
- What would you need to see before repeating the strongest claim?
- Who is missing from these documents?

Who actually gets to decide?

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

Words that do the work

Agenda item

Punto del orden del día

A specific matter scheduled for a meeting, often with a number, a description and an action type.

Gia's comment is about item 4, the proposal to close the park's lighted courts at 8 p.m.

Remit

Ámbito de competencia

The matters a body is responsible for and can act on.

The parks committee can recommend on park hours. It can't change bus routes.

Key message

Mensaje clave

The one point you want listeners to remember.

Mateo asks Gia, "What is the one thing you want them to answer?"

Public record

Registro público

Comments and names may be published and stay searchable.

Gia leaves her friend's private situation out because the comment may stay public.

One student's draft

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

Comment: Good evening. I'm Gia, and I live two blocks from the park. I'm here about item 4, the proposal to turn off the court lights at 8 p.m. ¹ On weekday evenings I've counted twenty to thirty people on the courts between 8 and 9 ². My friend works late and is going through a lot at home ³, so this is her only time to play. Please keep the lights on until 9 on weekdays this summer. Thank you.

Cutting note: I cut the part about the committee never listening to young people, because it didn't ask them for anything ⁴. I cut the long history of the park so the comment fits in two minutes.

- ¹ A precise destination: the item number and the exact proposal tell the committee what the comment is about.
- ² Strong evidence: a specific, first-hand observation tied to the hours in question.
- ³ Revise: this is someone else's private story, and it would stay in the public record. Keep the point that people work late without the personal detail.
- ⁴ Good reasoning in the note: the cut is justified by purpose, not only by length.

Works well Uses evidence Gap to fix Think about the reader

One revision

Before

~~My friend works late and is going through a lot at home, so this is her only time to play.~~

After

Many of us work until evening, so after 8 is the only time we can play.

The revision keeps the reason that matters to the committee while protecting a friend's privacy in a permanent record.

Teacher commentary

The cut comment has all four parts (item, observation, reason, request) and fits the time, and the cutting note explains choices by purpose. The one miss is keeping a friend's private situation, which the case flags because comments become public. Fixing it moves the response to Advanced on Audience, and acknowledging the residents' noise concern would strengthen Reasoning.

Teach it in one period

Grades 6—8

Write and practice a 60-second comment for the parks committee about the court hours.

Sources

The agenda item summary and comment instructions.

Objective

Students find where a decision is made and build a short, timed comment that names the item, gives one observation and makes one request.

Product

60-second comment (about 130 words)

Assessed by

The teacher checks the comment against the four success criteria and whether a listener can repeat the request back.

45 minutes	You	Students	Check for
5 min Pawnee vs. real	Contrast a Parks and Recreation meeting clip description with a real agenda page.	Note three differences.	Students notice time limits, agenda items and sign-up rules.
8 min Find the destination	Show the fictional committee agenda and comment instructions.	Identify the item, the body, the deadline and the time limit.	Students find item 4, the parks committee and a 2-minute limit.
10 min Cut the draft	Show Gia’s three-page draft summary.	Highlight what stays: item, observation, why it matters, request.	Kept lines map onto the four parts.
12 min Write and time	Model a 90-second comment. Hand out timers.	Write and time a 90-second comment.	Comment fits the time and ends with a specific request.
7 min Listener test	Partners play committee members.	Repeat the request back in one sentence.	Listener can restate the request accurately.
3 min Exit	Ask: what would you leave out because it may become public?	Write one example.	Example involves someone else’s private information.

Before class

Prepare the case documents, one set per pair:

- ✓ Parks committee agenda, Tuesday 6 p.m., item 4
- ✓ Public comment instructions posted with the agenda
- ✓ Gia’s three-page draft, Monday night (excerpt)
- ✓ Written comment from a nearby resident, submitted before the meeting (illustrative)

Every document is fictional case material, printable from the online field guide.

Questions to keep asking



Voz

Item 4, two minutes, sign up by 5 p.m. The destination comes before the draft.



Nexo

The parks committee can recommend court hours. Bus routes need a different body.



Onda

Her friend’s situation would stay in the public record. Her story, her choice.

Support every student, then assess

Success looks like

- ✓ Names the agenda item
- ✓ Shares one observation
- ✓ Makes one clear request
- ✓ Fits the time

Supports at this level

- Four-box organizer: item, what I saw, why it matters, what I ask
- Frames: “I’m here about item __. I noticed __.”
- Timer practice
- Option to submit in writing

Access

- Provide the agenda with item 4 highlighted
- Offer a written comment in place of speaking
- Spanish vocabulary: orden del día, comentario público, petición
- Allow students to record their comment for practice
- Reduce to a 45-second comment

Stretch

- Compare comment rules for two different local bodies
 - Track a real agenda item from discussion to vote
- Challenge:** Add one fact from the agenda to support your point.

Rubric	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.	Weights 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.

Standards this can show

SL.6.4 Common Core 6—8

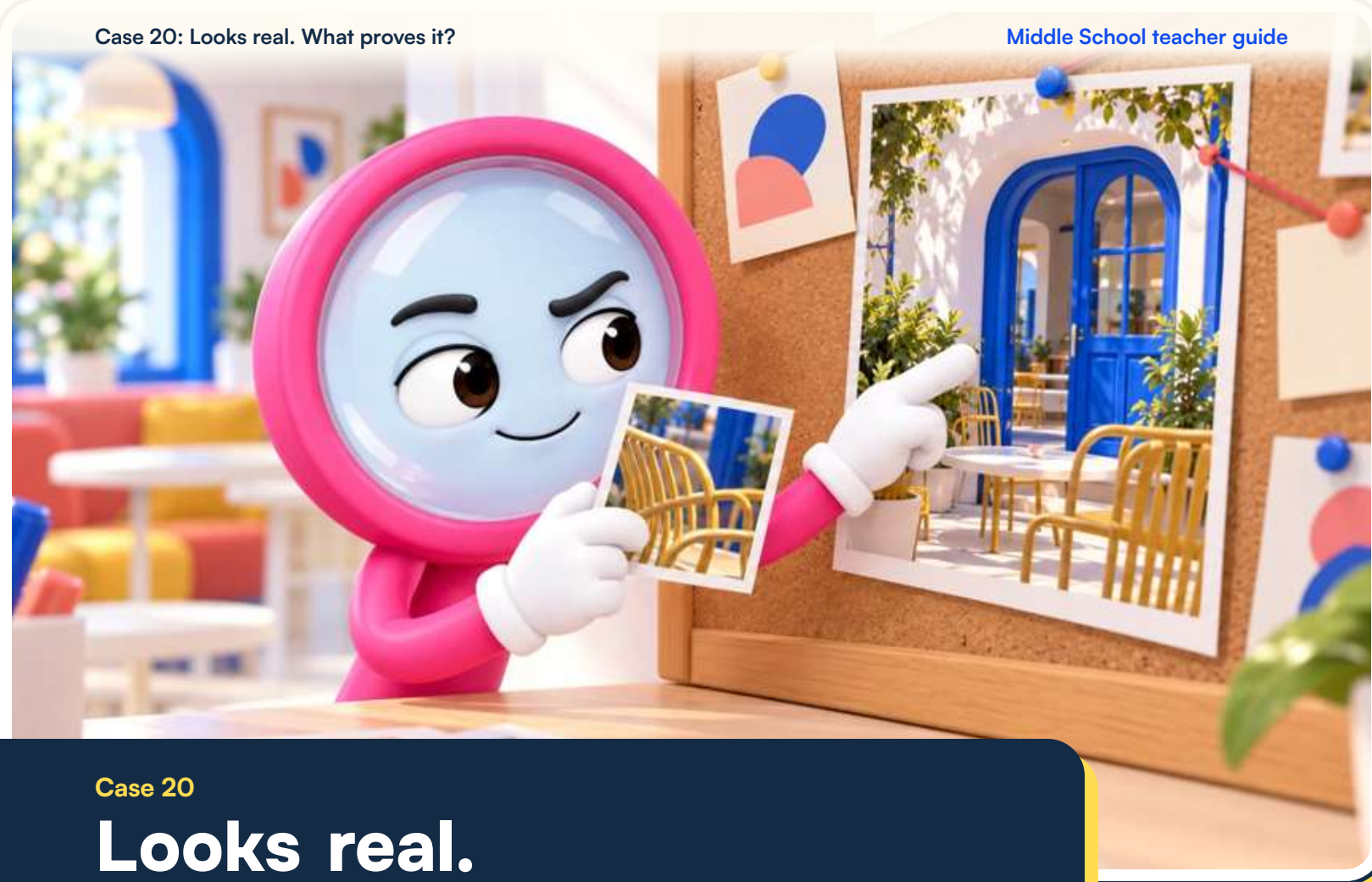
SL.8.4 Common Core 6—8

W.7.1 Common Core 6—8

D2.Civ.2.6-8 C3 Framework

D2.Civ.9.9-12 C3 Framework

D2.Civ.1.9-12 C3 Framework



Case 20

Looks real. What proves it?

A realistic image says the courtyard flooded today. What would it take to post that as true?

Generated and recycled images now move through group chats as fast as real ones, and organizations that repost them lose trust quickly. Students who can write an honest verification note, including “we can’t confirm this yet,” protect their audience and their own credibility.

In the real world

NPR, 2023 Fake viral images of an explosion at the Pentagon were probably created by AI

CNN, 2023 ‘Verified’ Twitter accounts share fake image of ‘explosion’ near Pentagon, causing confusion

Jordy

I wanted a clean yes or no for the recap. “We can’t verify it yet” is less fun. It’s also what’s true.

You’ll make

Completed card plus 2—3 sentences

Time

About 45 minutes

Level

Grades 6—8



The case file

Look at what's actually here before deciding what it means.

Fictional case material

1

Courtyard flood image with caption, shared Wednesday 2:48 p.m.

Image, described: a photo-like view of the campus courtyard with water over the paving and benches; a person in the foreground holds up a phone.

Caption: "Courtyard flooded today, stay away." No link, no date on the image and no original poster named.



Where did this image first appear, and when? What does the caption claim that the image alone cannot show?

Fictional case material

2

Sami's zoom-in of the hand, crew chat, Wednesday 3:02 p.m.

Zoomed screenshot of the foreground hand: the fingers seem to merge at the knuckles.

Sami: "The hand is weird. But who posted this first? That's what I want to know."



What can a strange detail tell you, and what can't it?

Fictional case material

3

Reply in the crew chat, Wednesday 3:05 p.m.

"My roommate's friend said she saw water near the library earlier."



Is this corroboration? Who actually saw what, where and when?

Fictional case material

4

Result from a free online image detector (illustrative)

"12% likely AI-generated."



What can a score tell you, and what can't it? Does it say anything about whether the courtyard flooded today?

Outside the story

The case is fictional. The questions in it are not. Here is where they show up in the real world.

Still missing

Who first posted the image and when, whether it shows this courtyard on this day, whether anyone with a dated photo saw water, and how quickly the facilities page would report a same-day flood.

Real-world evidence



Real source

National Institute of Standards and Technology, Reducing Risks Posed by Synthetic Content: An Overview of Technical Approaches to Digital Content Transparency

Summary, not a quotation: NIST describes approaches such as provenance data, labeling, watermarking and detection for synthetic content, and explains that each has technical limitations, so no single approach settles on its own whether content is synthetic.



article

Fake viral images of an explosion at the Pentagon were probably created by AI [NPR, 2023-05-22](#)

A realistic fake image spread fast and briefly moved markets before officials confirmed nothing happened.



article

'Verified' Twitter accounts share fake image of 'explosion' near Pentagon, causing confusion [CNN, 2023-05-22](#)

A blue check was not proof: accounts that looked trustworthy still shared an image with no real source.

Discuss before deciding

- Which item did you trust first, and why?
- What would you need to see before repeating the strongest claim?
- Who is missing from these documents?

What the evidence can hold up

Two claims are in play: the flood and the image. Sort each piece of evidence under the claim it actually bears on. What would settle either one?

Evidence	Claim 1 The courtyard flooded today.	Claim 2 The image was generated by AI.
1 The image shows water in a courtyard, with no date or source	Supports	—
2 Facilities alerts page at 3:10 p.m.: no active alerts	Challenges	—
3 Secondhand report of water near the library	Supports	—
4 An odd hand and a 12% detector score	—	Leaves open

Still open

- The image’s earliest source and date

Words that do the work

Provenance

Procedencia

Information about where a file came from and how it was handled.

Sami wants to know who first shared the courtyard image, not just how the hand looks.

Corroboration

Corroboración

Independent evidence that supports a claim from another direction.

A campus facilities alert or another person’s dated photo would corroborate a flood. The image alone can’t.

Verification note

Nota de verificación

A short public note saying what was checked, what was found and what remains unknown.

Jordy decides the recap gets a verification note instead of the image.

Burden of proof

Carga de la prueba

The idea that whoever makes a claim should supply the evidence for it.

The caption claims a flood today. It’s on the claim, not on Jordy, to show where and when.

One student's draft

Write the verification note Jordy posts instead of the image, plus a short explanation of your choices.

Verification note: We've seen the courtyard flood picture going around. We checked the campus facilities alerts page at 3:10 and it shows no flooding today¹, and we couldn't find who posted the image first². The picture is fake, so please ignore it.³ Check the official alerts page before you change plans. Why I wrote it this way: I didn't repost the image because people would share it without reading the note. I listed what we checked so followers can check it too. The hand in the picture also looks weird, which shows it was made with AI⁴.

- 1** Strong: a named source and a time, so followers can check it themselves.
- 2** Honest about a gap in provenance, which is part of what was checked.
- 3** Revise: the evidence shows the flood is unconfirmed, not that the image is fake. It could be a real photo from another day or place.
- 4** Revise: an odd detail is a reason to look closer, not proof. Visual clues and detectors both have error rates.

Works well Uses evidence Gap to fix Think about the reader

One revision

Before

The picture is fake, so please ignore it.

After

We can't confirm the flood, so we're not sharing the image as news, and we'll update here by 6 p.m.

The revision reports exactly what the evidence supports and gives followers a time to check back, instead of a verdict the crew can't defend.

Teacher commentary

The note does the hard part well: it names a source, a time and a provenance gap, and it keeps the image out of the feed. It then overclaims twice, calling the image fake and treating an odd hand as proof of AI. Replacing both verdicts with calibrated language moves the response from Developing to Proficient on Reasoning.

Teach it in one period

Grades 6—8

With a partner, fill an image-check card and write two sentences telling friends whether to trust the courtyard picture.

Sources

The image description, caption and campus facilities page only.

Objective

Students separate what an image shows from what its caption claims and use “unverified” accurately when proof is missing.

Product

Completed card plus 2—3 sentences

Assessed by

The teacher checks the card and sentences against the four success criteria, listening in partner talk for the difference between “unverified” and “fake.”

45 minutes	You	Students	Check for
5 min The image	Describe the courtyard image and caption: “Courtyard flooded today, stay away.” No link.	Rate belief 1—5 and write what makes it convincing.	Reasons are about appearance, not source.
8 min Zoom-in trap	Show the class zooming into a hand. Ask: what does an odd hand prove?	Sort clues into “reason to look closer” and “proof.”	Students put the hand under “reason to look closer.”
12 min Trace it	Hand out the earliest post found, the campus facilities page and a weather note.	Build a chain: claim, earliest source, date, corroboration.	Chains show no independent record of a flood today.
10 min Read the limits	Summarize NIST: provenance, labels, watermarks and detection each have gaps.	Write what a detector score can and can’t tell you.	Answer mentions error rates or missing provenance.
7 min Write the note	Model: checked / found / still open.	Draft a 50—80 word verification note for the recap.	Note states uncertainty without calling anyone a liar.
3 min Exit	Ask: what would change your confidence?	Name one piece of evidence.	Answer names independent, dated evidence.

Before class

Prepare the case documents, one set per pair:

- ✓ Courtyard flood image with caption, shared Wednesday 2:48 p.m.
- ✓ Sami’s zoom-in of the hand, crew chat, Wednesday 3:02 p.m.
- ✓ Reply in the crew chat, Wednesday 3:05 p.m.
- ✓ Result from a free online image detector (illustrative)

Questions to keep asking



Lupa
No link, no date, no original poster. The image arrived without its backstory.



Duda
What would you expect to find if the courtyard really flooded today?

Support every student, then assess

Success looks like

- ✓ Separates what the image shows from what it claims
- ✓ Names a better source to check
- ✓ Uses “unverified” correctly
- ✓ Doesn’t accuse the poster

Supports at this level

- Image-check card: claim, who posted first, date, other proof
- Frames: “The picture shows __. It doesn’t show __.”
- Vocabulary cards: source, evidence, unverified
- Talk before writing

Access

- Use a printed image-check card with icons
- Describe the image aloud for students with low vision
- Spanish vocabulary: imagen, fuente, verificado, sin confirmar
- Offer an oral verification note
- Reduce to two checks: who posted first, is there another record

Stretch

- Compare how two news organizations describe their image-verification process
- Research what content credentials record and what they cannot show

Challenge: Add one other piece of evidence that would change your mind.

Rubric	Beginning	Developing	Proficient	Advanced
Evidence	Treats the image as proof.	Cites a detector or a detail as a verdict.	Checks the earliest source and an independent record.	Checks several sources and names what each can’t show.
Reasoning	Declares real or fake with no basis.	Hedges without explaining why.	Matches confidence to evidence.	Separates authenticity of the file from truth of the event.
Audience & purpose	Urges spreading.	Warns without guidance.	Gives followers a safe next step.	Gives a next step, a follow-up time and a way to contribute evidence.
Revision	No change.	Softens words only.	Replaces the verdict with a verification note.	Explains how each change protects followers and credibility.

Standards this can show

RI.7.8 Common Core 6—8

SL.8.2 Common Core 6—8

RH.6-8.7 Common Core 6—8

D3.1.6-8 C3 Framework

D3.2.9-12 C3 Framework

D3.3.9-12 C3 Framework

Track the work across the year

Each case has its own four-level rubric on its support page. The criteria repeat, so growth is visible: mark the level each student or group reached, case by case.

Case	Evidence	Reasoning	Audience	Revision	Took a civic step
1 Before you repost					
2 Same test. More questions					
3 The apology is not the repair					
4 Whose room is it, anyway?					
5 Okay... where did the rest of my paycheck go?					
6 Who gets to see your school records?					
7 Who decides what stays on the shelf?					
8 Is it a recommendation or an ad?					
9 Your ballot is more local than your feed.					
10 A city you can actually reach					
11 Same work. Different pay. Why?					
12 A protest is not one legal question					
13 Before it reaches the bin					
14 Credit is not the whole copyright answer					
15 Internship, or someone's unpaid job?					
16 "It's our policy" is not the end					
17 A good choice for whom?					
18 Follow the school money					
19 Give your comment a destination					
20 Looks real. What proves it?					

Feedback that moves the work

- Name the evidence the student used, then ask what it can't show.
- Point to one line a reader might misread.
- Ask for one revision, and have the student say why it's better.