Name: _____ Date: _____

The Clerk Who Writes Down Every Decision

Circle group

Every town has records. Many towns have a person in charge of them. This person is called the clerk. The clerk works in the town office. The clerk keeps important papers safe. These can be copies of local laws and records of meetings. In many towns, the clerk also helps run elections.

At each council meeting, the clerk or an assistant writes notes called minutes. The minutes tell who came. They tell what was proposed. They tell how each vote turned out. At the next meeting, the council checks that the minutes are correct. Once they are approved, they become part of the official record.

Why go to all this trouble? A town makes many decisions over the years. Without written records, people would forget. They might not agree on what was decided. A resident might wonder why a stop sign stands on a corner. That person can ask to see the minutes. In many places, anyone can read the records. The government works for the people who live there.

Records help in another way. Long from now, historians can read them. They can learn how the town lived and what mattered to it. A good clerk must be careful and fair. The clerk writes what truly happened, not what someone wishes had happened.

Questions

1. What kinds of things does the town clerk keep safe?

_____

_____

2. What are minutes?

_____

_____

3. What happens before minutes become the official record?

_____

_____

4. Why might a resident ask to see the minutes?

_____

_____

5. Why can anyone read the records in many places?

_____

_____

6. How can old records help historians?

_____

_____

Words to know

clerk: a person who keeps records and does office work
minutes: the written notes that tell what happened at a meeting
records: papers or files that keep facts for later
official: approved by people in charge and counted as the real one
historians: people who study the past

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

The Clerk Who Writes Down Every Decision

Triangle group

Every town has records, and many towns have a person in charge of them called the clerk. The clerk works in the town office and keeps important papers safe. These can include copies of local laws and records of meetings. In many towns, the clerk also helps run elections.

At each council meeting, the clerk or an assistant writes notes called minutes. The minutes list who came, what was proposed, and how each vote turned out. At the next meeting, the council checks that the minutes are correct. Once they are approved, they become part of the official record.

Why go to all this trouble? A town makes many decisions over the years. Without written records, people would forget. They might disagree about what was decided. A resident who wonders why a stop sign stands on a corner can ask to see the minutes. In many places, anyone can read the records. The government works for the people who live there.

Records help in another way. Long from now, historians can read them. They can learn how the town lived and what mattered to it. A good clerk has to be careful and fair. The clerk writes what truly happened, not what someone wishes had happened.

Questions

1. What kinds of things does the town clerk keep safe?

_____

_____

2. What are minutes?

_____

_____

3. What happens before minutes become the official record?

_____

_____

4. Why might a resident ask to see the minutes?

_____

_____

5. Why are records open for anyone to read in many places?

_____

_____

6. How can old records help historians?

_____

_____

Words to know

clerk: a person who keeps records and does office work
minutes: the written notes that tell what happened at a meeting
records: papers or files that keep facts for later
official: approved by people in charge and counted as the real one
historians: people who study the past

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

The Clerk Who Writes Down Every Decision

Square group

Every town accumulates records, and many towns assign a person to be responsible for them, who is known as the clerk. The clerk works in the town office and keeps important documents safe, including copies of local laws and the records of meetings. In many towns, the clerk also assists with the administration of elections.

At every council meeting, the clerk or an assistant writes notes called minutes. The minutes list who attended, what was proposed, and how each vote turned out. At the following meeting, the council confirms that the minutes are accurate, and once they have been approved, they become part of the official record.

Why go to all this trouble? Over the years, a town makes an enormous number of decisions. Without written records, people would forget, or they might disagree about what had actually been decided. A resident who wonders why a stop sign stands on a particular corner can request to see the minutes. In many places, the records are open for anyone to read, because the government works on behalf of the people who live there.

Records are valuable in yet another way. Long into the future, historians can read them to learn how the town lived and what mattered to its people. A good clerk must be careful and fair, writing down what truly happened rather than what someone might wish had happened.

Questions

1. What kinds of things does the town clerk keep safe?

_____

_____

2. What are minutes?

_____

_____

3. What happens before minutes become part of the official record?

_____

_____

4. Why might a resident request to see the minutes?

_____

_____

5. Why are the records open for anyone to read in many places?

_____

_____

6. How can old records be valuable to historians?

_____

_____

Words to know

clerk: a person who keeps records and does office work
minutes: the written notes that tell what happened at a meeting
records: papers or files that keep facts for later
official: approved by people in charge and counted as the real one
historians: people who study the past

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

For the teacher: The Clerk Who Writes Down Every Decision

Each student sheet carries a shape, not a level. The same topic and facts, written three ways.

Circle: The Clerk Who Writes Down Every Decision

Easier · 214 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 3.7

1. Important papers, such as copies of local laws and records of meetings.
2. Notes from a meeting that tell who came, what was proposed and how each vote turned out.
3. The council checks that they are correct and approves them.
4. To find out why a decision was made, such as why a stop sign stands on a corner.
5. The government works for the people who live there.
6. They show how the town lived and what mattered to it long ago.

Triangle: The Clerk Who Writes Down Every Decision

This passage · 206 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 4.8

1. Important papers, such as copies of local laws and records of meetings.
2. Notes from a meeting that list who came, what was proposed and how each vote turned out.
3. The council checks that they are correct and approves them.
4. To find out why a decision was made, such as why a stop sign stands on a corner.
5. The government works for the people who live there.
6. They show how the town lived and what mattered to it long ago.

Square: The Clerk Who Writes Down Every Decision

Harder · 230 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 8.8

1. Important documents, such as copies of local laws and records of meetings.
2. Notes from a meeting that list who attended, what was proposed and how each vote turned out.
3. The council confirms that they are accurate and approves them.
4. To learn why a decision was made, such as why a stop sign stands on a particular corner.
5. The government works on behalf of the people who live there.
6. They reveal how the town lived and what mattered to its people long ago.