

RECURSO GRATIS • NIVEL PRINCIPIANTE

El voto de la comunidad

A B1 story about local participation, competing needs, and what it means to listen before casting a vote.

LISTEN

CHOOSE

PARTICIPATE

APRENDE GRATIS EN [EZINGLES.COM](https://ezingles.com)

ANTES DE LEER

Prepare to read

A neighborhood receives public money for one project. Valeria supports a youth center until listening to other residents makes the decision more complicated.

Think before you read

How should a community choose when several projects are valuable but only one can be funded?

Reading goal

Notice vocabulary for public decisions, proposals, and participation. Compare arguments based on personal experience and shared evidence.

THE STORY · PART 1

One fund, three proposals

The city gave the Eastwood neighborhood \$300,000 and invited residents to decide how to spend it through a public **vote**.

Three **proposals** reached the final ballot: renovate an empty building as a youth center, improve lighting around the park, or create a shuttle to the regional medical clinic.

Valeria immediately supported the youth center. Her fifteen-year-old brother often studied at a fast-food restaurant because their apartment was crowded and the library closed early.

She joined the campaign and designed bilingual flyers. 'Young people need a safe place to learn and belong,' the flyers said.

At the first community meeting, Valeria volunteered as a Spanish-English **interpreter**. She expected the job to strengthen support for her proposal.

Instead, it forced her to listen closely to every argument.

A father described crossing a dark park after his evening shift. An older woman named Mrs. Green explained that she missed two medical appointments because the nearest bus required three transfers.

Supporters of each project had photographs, personal stories, and cost **estimates**. None of the needs seemed imaginary.

After the meeting, Valeria's campaign partner complained that the shuttle proposal mostly benefited older residents.

Valeria remembered Mrs. Green's shaking voice and replied, 'That does not make the need less real.'

Questions behind the slogans

Valeria began reviewing the documents instead of relying only on campaign slogans.

The youth center could serve sixty students each afternoon, but the budget did not include staff salaries after the first year. The city expected the neighborhood to find long-term **funding**.

The lighting project covered the largest number of residents and might reduce accidents. However, police data did not clearly prove that brighter lights alone would reduce crime.

The shuttle could make four daily trips, serving fewer people but meeting an urgent health need. Its operating contract was guaranteed for three years.

At a public forum, residents challenged each team. Some questions were thoughtful; others became **hostile**.

When someone suggested that youth simply needed better parents, Valeria responded firmly without insulting the speaker. She explained how work schedules, housing costs, and limited public space affected families.

Later, she asked the shuttle team whether wheelchair users could board. Their original vehicle plan was not **accessible**. The team promised to revise it, even though doing so would reduce the number of seats.

Valeria's brother was frustrated by her questions. 'Whose side are you on?' he asked.

'I still support the center,' she said. 'But supporting an idea should make me more responsible for testing it, not less.'

Her campaign updated its plan with a partnership that could provide staff after year one. The proposal became stronger because residents had questioned it.

After the ballots are counted

Voting took place over three days at the library, a school, and online. Materials were available in four languages, and volunteers helped residents understand the process without telling them how to vote.

Valeria cast her **ballot** for the youth center. She made the choice with less certainty than she had felt at the beginning, but with more information.

The shuttle won by thirty-seven votes. The youth center finished second, and the lighting project third.

Valeria's brother said all their work had been wasted. She felt disappointed too, especially when she imagined another winter of him studying beside a noisy soda machine.

Mrs. Green found Valeria after the results. 'Your questions made the shuttle accessible,' she said. 'Would your team help us plan the route?'

Valeria agreed on one condition: shuttle supporters would join a committee seeking private and city funding for evening youth programs.

Over the next year, the medical shuttle began operating. The library also tested later hours twice a week, using volunteers while the youth-center committee pursued a permanent location.

Not every promise succeeded, and disagreements continued. Still, people who had entered the process as competing campaigns began sharing contacts, research, and meeting space.

Valeria learned that civic **participation** was not a single moment in a voting booth. A ballot selected one project, but it did not end the neighborhood's other responsibilities.

She still believed the youth center deserved funding. Now she also understood that losing a vote did not remove her voice or excuse her from listening.

Democracy asks us to choose, but community begins with what we do after the choice has been made.

Words for civic participation

vote	voto / votación
proposals	propuestas
interpreter	intérprete
estimates	estimaciones
funding	financiamiento
hostile	hostil
accessible	accesible
ballot	papeleta
participation	participación
campaign	campaña

COMPREHENSION

Evaluate the proposals

A. Choose the best answer

1. Why does Valeria initially support the youth center? a) Her brother needs study space b) She works there c) It costs least
2. What weakness does the youth-center plan have? a) No building b) No long-term staff funding c) Too many buses
3. How does Valeria improve the shuttle proposal? a) She changes its route b) She requests accessibility c) She increases fares
4. Which project wins? a) Park lighting b) Youth center c) Medical shuttle

B. Interpret

1. Why does Valeria say supporting an idea should make her test it more carefully?
2. In what ways does Valeria continue participating after her proposal loses?

C. Write

Choose one proposal. Write a 4–6 sentence public comment that states your position, uses one fact, recognizes another need, and suggests a next step.

ANSWER KEY

Review and reflect

A. 1. a 2. b 3. b 4. c

B. Suggested answers

1. Honest examination reveals weaknesses and produces a more responsible plan; support should not require ignoring evidence. 2. She helps plan an accessible shuttle route and organizes continued work for youth programs and funding.

Sample public comment

I support the youth center because it could serve sixty students each afternoon. I recognize that medical transportation is urgent, especially for residents who cannot drive. Before approving the center, we must secure staff funding beyond the first year. I suggest forming a partnership with the library and local nonprofits while the city reviews future transportation funds.

KEEP GOING

Discuss: What responsibilities remain after your preferred option loses?