How do we solve problems that affect an entire community? You might consider a town pool or new traffic signs, for example. Jot down your ideas.
Using Information to Solve Problems  Getting accurate information is critical when you need to find a solution to a problem. You may gather information from different sources, including workplace documents, such as memos, e-mails, and reports; public documents, such as schedules, government publications, and Web sites; and consumer documents, such as contracts, advertisements, and manuals. When you have gathered your information, judge its reliability by evaluating its sources. You may also find that you need more information to solve the problem.

Reading Focus

 Previewing  When you preview, you look over text you are about to read to see what lies ahead. You may begin by noticing titles, headings, subheadings, boldface terms, and illustrations. You can also read opening sentences or paragraphs.

 Into Action  To complete a preview chart, list each document you will read, explain what it is, and describe the topic it covers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title/Description</th>
<th>Kind of Document</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Memorandum</td>
<td>memo from the Parks Department</td>
<td>issues regarding the new skateboard park: need, liability, cost, location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The City Beat</td>
<td>newspaper article</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Writing Focus

Preparing for Constructed Response

Imagine that you are trying to solve the problems described in these documents. Use the information provided to form opinions about the skateboard park and the dog run.

Vocabulary

Skateboard Park Documents

potentially (poh TEHN shuh lee) adv.: possibly. The situation is potentially dangerous because people could be hurt.

proposal (pruh POHZ uhl) n.: suggestion. We presented our proposal for the new park at the city council meeting.

hazards (HAZ uhrdz) n.: dangers; things that can cause danger. Broken glass and sharp nails are two street hazards.

Leash-Free Dog Run Documents

empowered (ehm POW uhrd) adj.: given the power to do something. The police are empowered to fine lawbreakers.

ample (AM puhl) adj.: as much as is needed; enough. We need to give people ample opportunities to speak.

Language Coach

Prefixes  A prefix is a word part added to the front of a word. The prefixes –en and –em mean “to cause to be.” Which Vocabulary word has one of these prefixes? What does it mean without the prefix?

Learn It Online

To learn more about analyzing various forms of writing, visit MediaScope at: go.hrw.com L8-611 Go

Preparing to Read 611
DEPARTMENT OF
PARKS AND RECREATION

Read with a Purpose  Read these workplace, public, and consumer documents to solve a skateboarding problem.

CRITICAL ISSUES

A. Need. Ten percent of the families in this city, about seven thousand households, include at least one skateboarder. The city provides no designated space for skateboarding. Police reports show that citations for illegal skating are rising every month. This problem is particularly acute in downtown areas, leading to complaints from businesses. The nearest public skateboard park is twenty miles to the east in Mogul, where illegal skating dropped sharply when its park opened last year.

B. Liability. California AB 1296 states that persons who skateboard on public property are expected to know that it is a potentially dangerous sport. They cannot sue the city, county, or state for their injuries as long as the city has passed an ordinance requiring
- helmet, kneepads, and elbow pads for skaters
- clear and visible signs warning citizens of this requirement
- citations for skaters who violate the ordinance

Such an ordinance was enacted by our city council on July 15, 2000. Therefore, building a skateboard park would not pose a liability risk.

C. Cost. Local groups have raised half the necessary $140,000. The Parks and Recreation Department’s budget can fund the other half. Costs will be minimal—only inspection for damage and yearly maintenance.

D. Location. The city already owns two sites:
- 1.3 acres of the park area between 180th Avenue and 360th Drive, bordered by Drab Street and Grinding Drive, two heavily used thoroughfares. On two sides of the park are neighborhood houses.
- 2.1 acres in the 15-acre sports park at Ramp and Spin avenues. This site is set back from heavily traveled roads but still offers excellent access and visibility from service roads within the park. It is also three-tenths of a mile from the fire station and paramedic aid. There are no residential neighborhoods bordering the complex.

Vocabulary

potentially (poh TEHN shuh lee) adv.: possibly.
A lively debate occurred at last Tuesday’s packed city council meeting on the subject of whether to establish a skateboard park. Mayor Gridlock made a few opening remarks and then turned the microphone over to J. Cool, Director of Parks and Recreation. Mr. Cool read from portions of a report prepared by his staff, who had investigated the need for and the liability, risks, cost, and possible location of a park. Several members of the community spoke.

K. Skater said, “Skateboarding is a challenging sport. It’s good for us. But right now we have no place to skate, and so kids are getting tickets for illegal skating. Lots of people say it’s too dangerous, but that’s not true. Kids get hurt in every sport, but you can make it a lot less dangerous for us if you give us a smooth place to practice. Still, we skaters have to be responsible and only take risks we can handle. That teaches us a lot.”

D. T. Merchant remarked, “I am a store owner downtown. These skaters use our curbs and handrails as their personal skating ramps. They threaten pedestrians and scare people. If we build them an alternative, I believe most will use it. Then the police can concentrate on the few who break the rules.”

G. Homeowner had this to say: “Skaters are illiterate bums. They think safety gear means thick hair gel. They have no respect. They will disturb my neighborhood all night long with their subhuman noise. I would like to remind the city council—I pay taxes and I vote. A skateboard park? Not in my backyard!”
F. Parent: “My son is an outstanding citizen. He is respectful and well behaved. He also lives to skateboard. This city has placed my son at risk by failing to give him a safe place to skate. If we were talking about building a basketball court, nobody would think twice before agreeing. I’m a voter too, and I expect the city council to be responsive to the needs of all citizens.”

Finally, S. B. Owner said, “I am the owner of the Skate Bowl. Skateboarding is not a fad. It is here to stay. You may not like the way some skaters act or look, but I know them all. They’re great kids. Seems like most of the good folks here tonight are worried about safety. So here’s what I propose: I will sell all safety gear at my store at 50 percent off. That’s less than it costs me, folks. All that you parents have to do is fill out the emergency information card for your skater and return it to me. I’ll see that the information is entered in a database that paramedics, hospital workers, and police officers can access. I’ll also make sure that everyone who comes to my store knows what the Consumer Product Safety Commission says: ‘Kids who want to skate are going to skate. Let’s help them skate safely.’”

Mr. Owner’s proposal was met with a standing ovation. Plans to move ahead with the new skateboard park project will be put to a formal vote at next month’s regular session.
COUPON

Discount does not extend to shoes, padded clothing, boards, trucks, stickers, or any other equipment. Discount does not include state or local sales tax. Discount is not good in combination with any other discount or coupon. Bearer must show photo identification, such as a school ID or a yearbook photograph.

Reading Focus

What is the purpose of this coupon?

Informational Focus

Why is it important to read the fine print on this coupon?
Approximately 26,000 persons go to hospital emergency rooms each year for skateboarding-related injuries. Several factors—lack of protective equipment, poor board maintenance, and irregular riding surfaces—are involved in these accidents.

Who gets injured. Six of every ten skateboard injuries happen to children under fifteen years of age. Skateboarders who have been skating for less than a week suffer one third of the injuries; riders with a year or more of skating experience have the next highest number of injuries.

Injuries to first-time skateboarders are, for the most part, caused by falls. Experienced riders suffer injuries mostly when they fall after their skateboards strike rocks and other irregularities in the riding surface, or when they attempt difficult stunts.

Environmental hazards. Irregular surfaces account for more than half the skateboarding injuries caused by falls. Before riding, skateboarders should check the surface for holes, bumps, rocks, and debris. Areas set aside for skateboarding generally have smoother riding surfaces. Skateboarding in the street can result in collisions with cars, causing serious injury or even death.

The skateboard. Before using their boards, riders should check them for hazards, such as loose, broken, or cracked parts; sharp edges; slippery top surfaces; and wheels with nicks and cracks. Serious defects should be corrected by a qualified repair person.

Protective gear. Protective gear—such as slip-resistant, closed shoes, helmets, and specially designed padding—may not fully protect skateboarders from fractures, but its use is recommended because such gear can reduce the number and severity of injuries.

The protective gear currently on the market is not subject to federal performance standards, and so careful selection by consumers is necessary. In a helmet, look for proper fit and a chin strap; make sure the helmet does not block the rider’s vision and hearing. Body padding should fit comfortably. If it is tight, it can restrict circulation and reduce the skater’s ability to move freely. Loose-fitting padding, on the other hand, can slip off or slide out of position.


**Informational Focus** Using Information What ideas or opinions from the other documents can be supported with these statistics?

**Read and Discuss** What does the information in the Consumer Safety Commission document add to the argument?

**Vocabulary** hazards (HAZ uhrdz) n.: dangers; things that can cause danger.

Read with a Purpose Now that you’ve read these documents, how would you solve the skateboarding problem?
Skateboard Park Documents

Practicing the Standards

Informational Text and Vocabulary

1. The memorandum gives information about —
   A the benefits of opening a skateboard park
   B the reasons against building a skateboard park
   C a proposal for developing a skateboard park
   D a history of the old skateboard park

2. Which statement is supported by information in all the documents?
   A Many skateboarding injuries are caused by dangerous surfaces.
   B Skateboarding is the most dangerous sport practiced in cities today.
   C More students skateboard than play any other sport or activity.
   D Most citizens believe that skateboarding should be outlawed.

3. Which document would you read to learn about all sides of the issue?
   A The advertisement
   B The memorandum
   C The Consumer Product Safety Commission document
   D The newspaper article

4. Another word for hazards is —
   A faults
   B dangers
   C arguments
   D worries

5. If a problem is potentially serious, it is —
   A very serious
   B not at all serious
   C definitely serious
   D possibly serious

6. Someone who presents a proposal gives a —
   A suggestion
   B summary
   C reaction
   D prediction

Writing Focus

7. If you lived in this community, would you support the new skateboard park? Write a letter to the city council explaining your opinion. Cite information from the skateboard park documents to support your position. If you support the park, be sure to specify which site you prefer and explain why.

What Do You Think Now?

What do these documents suggest about how we can solve community problems?