

Are Public Curfews Fair?

Should teens be allowed to stay out, or forced to go home?

Do your parents give you a *curfew*--a time you have to be in at night? Or do town officials make that call for them?

People are debating public curfews in and out of court. The U.S. Supreme Court has avoided it so far. But it might not be able to for much longer.

Whom do curfews affect? And what do curfew laws say? What happens to teens who violate them?

Curfews apply to *minors* (anyone under 18). The laws vary. Most curfews are 10 p.m. during the week and 12 midnight on Fridays and Saturdays.

Police often question teens who are out past curfew. Those who have broken the curfew are taken home or to the police station. From there, teens may call their parents.

Some minors receive fines of up to \$500 for repeat offenses. Others may have to do work for their community.

Does that seem fair? Read the arguments below. Then decide.

Yes! Public Curfews Are Fair!

Cities and towns should have curfews. "[A curfew] allows less time to get in trouble with gangs, alcohol, drugs, and things like that," said one teen.

Curfews lower the number of teens involved in crimes. From 1995 to 1999, the number of minors arrested for violent crimes dropped 23 percent. Experts credit public curfews for the drop in crime.

Curfews don't take away teens' rights. Minors don't have the same rights as adults. If a movie theater can keep minors out of R-rated movies, why can't a law keep minors from staying out late?

Curfews help parents and teens. Some teens don't listen to their parents. Public curfews give parents some extra help. They make sure teens are back at home by a certain time.

No! Public Curfews Aren't Fair!

Cities and towns should not have curfews. "It is unfair to punish good kids who are out trying to make something of themselves when only a small percentage of young people are committing crimes," said one parent.

Curfews don't lower teen crime. Studies of curfews in Tulsa, Oklahoma, showed that arrests rose despite the curfew law. Curfews don't stop teens from getting into trouble. Teens who want to commit a crime won't let a curfew stop them.

Our country is based on freedom. Curfews violate a minor's rights. The First Amendment gives all people the right to gather in groups. Shouldn't that law apply to minors also?

Parents are responsible for their underage children. It's not the law's place to be another parent. It's up to parents to choose a curfew.

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. Which of the following is a possible consequence for a teen who is repeatedly out past curfew?

- A The teen might be taken to the police station.
- B The teen might receive a fine of up to \$500.
- C The teen might have to call their parents.
- D The teen might have to be home by 10 p.m. during the week.

2. Which of the following accurately states one argument for and one argument against curfews for minors?

- A An argument for curfews is that minors should be fined for breaking curfew. One argument against curfews is that minors should listen to their parents.
- B One argument for curfews is that curfews do not help with the problem of teen crime. One argument against curfews is that curfews violate the rights of minors.
- C One argument for curfews is that curfews lower the teen crime rate. One argument against curfews is that parents, not the law, should decide about curfews for their children.
- D One argument for curfews is that curfews do not take away the rights of minors. One argument against curfews is that parents need curfews to help keep their children safe.

3. It can be inferred from the passage that

- A many teens appreciate having a curfew
- B some teens do not follow the curfew laws
- C many teens do not listen to their parents
- D some teens have the same rights as adults

4. Read the following sentences and answer the question: "Whom do curfews affect? And what do curfew laws say? What happens to teens who violate them?"

What does the word **violate** mean?

- A to do something that isn't allowed
- B to stay out very late at night
- C to question someone about their activities
- D to help parents raise their children

5. This passage deals primarily with

- A curfew laws and whether or not they are a good thing
- B police officers and the work that they do
- C movie theaters and the R-rated movies that they show
- D parents and the best way to raise children

6. What are two arguments in favor of curfews?

7. Why might a town government decide to make a law enforcing a curfew for minors?

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

Some minors receive fines of up to \$500 for repeat offenses _____ others may have to do work for their community.

- A after
- B therefore
- C so
- D and

9. Answer the following questions based on the sentence below.

Sometimes cities and towns fine teenagers up to \$500 for breaking curfew laws.

Who? cities and towns

(do) What? _____

Why? _____

10. Read the vocabulary word and definition below and complete questions 10a, 10b, and 11.

Vocabulary word: vary (var · y): to be different from something else.

10a. Read the sentences below and underline the word **vary**.

1. The amount of homework I get varies from one class to the next.
2. We realized that the length of our jump ropes varies from each other, and decided to use the longer one.
3. The amount of sleep we need varies from person to person.
4. The day camp schedule varies in that some days start at 8:00 a.m. and other days start at 9:00 a.m.
5. I usually vary the clothes I wear depending on the weather outside.

10b. Which of the following pictures shows dogs that vary from each other?



11. If identical twins dressed alike walked into our classroom, could we say that they vary? Why or why not?

Teacher Guide & Answers

Passage Reading Level: Lexile 640

Featured Text Structure: Argumentative – the writer presents evidence for both sides of an argument

Passage Summary: In the first part of the passage, the author sets forth facts about public curfews for teens in the United States. In the second part, the author lays out arguments for and against whether public curfews are fair.

1. Which of the following is a possible consequence for a teen who is repeatedly out past curfew?
 - A The teen might be taken to the police station.
 - B The teen might receive a fine of up to \$500.**
 - C The teen might have to call their parents.
 - D The teen might have to be home by 10 p.m. during the week.
2. Which of the following accurately states one argument for and one argument against curfews for minors?
 - A An argument for curfews is that minors should be fined for breaking curfew. One argument against curfews is that minors should listen to their parents.
 - B One argument for curfews is that curfews do not help with the problem of teen crime. One argument against curfews is that curfews violate the rights of minors.
 - C One argument for curfews is that curfews lower the teen crime rate. One argument against curfews is that parents, not the law, should decide about curfews for their children.**
 - D One argument for curfews is that curfews do not take away the rights of minors. One argument against curfews is that parents need curfews to help keep their children safe.
3. It can be inferred from the passage that
 - A many teens appreciate having a curfew
 - B some teens do not follow the curfew laws**
 - C many teens do not listen to their parents
 - D some teens have the same rights as adults
4. Read the following sentences and answer the question: "Whom do curfews affect? And what do curfew laws say? What happens to teens who violate them?"

What does the word **violate** mean?

- A to do something that isn't allowed**
 - B to stay out very late at night
 - C to question someone about their activities
 - D to help parents raise their children
5. This passage deals primarily with
 - A curfew laws and whether or not they are a good thing**
 - B police officers and the work that they do
 - C movie theaters and the R-rated movies that they show
 - D parents and the best way to raise children

6. What are two arguments in favor of curfews?

Suggested answer: One argument is that curfews reduce the teen crime rate. The other argument is that curfews help parents by making sure teens are home on time. [paragraphs #9, 11]

7. Why might a town government decide to make a law enforcing a curfew for minors?

Suggested answer: A town government might make a curfew if the town officials feel that the teens in town are causing a lot of trouble at night.

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

Some minors receive fines of up to \$500 for repeat offenses _____ others may have to do work for their community.

- A after
- B therefore
- C so
- D and

9. Answer the following questions based on the sentence below.

Cities and towns fine teenagers up to \$500 for breaking curfew laws.

Who? cities and towns

(do) What? **fine teenagers**

Why? **for breaking curfew laws**

10. ReadWorks recommends that you teach this vocabulary word to the whole class out loud using the four steps listed below.

Vocabulary Word: vary

Step 1: Introduce the word

- a. Teacher writes the word on the board and divides it into syllables: (var · y)
- b. Teacher says: "This word is vary. What is the word?" [All students reply together out loud: "vary."]

Step 2: Provide a child-friendly definition

- a. Teacher says: "Vary means to be different from something else."
- b. Teacher says: "In the text, the author states that the curfew laws vary, meaning that they are different from each other. Some towns may have curfews of one time, and other towns may have curfews with a different time. The curfews are different, or we can say they vary."
- c. Teacher says: "What is the word?" [All students reply together out loud: "vary."]

Step 3: Practice the word

Teacher provides examples and additional opportunities to repeat the word. Read the 1st sentence out loud to your students. Begin reading it again and when you come to the vocabulary word prompt students to say the vocabulary word out loud. Then, finish reading the sentence out loud to our students.

- 10a.**
1. The amount of homework I get varies from one class to the next.
 2. We realized that the length of our jump ropes varies from each other, and decided to use the longer one.
 3. The amount of sleep we need varies from person to person.
 4. The day camp schedule varies in that some days start at 8:00 a.m. and other days start at 9:00 a.m.
 5. I usually vary the clothes I wear depending on the weather outside.

Step 4: Check for student understanding.

This step can be completed as a whole class activity or as an independent practice.

- 10b.** Which of the following pictures shows dogs that vary from each other?



- 11.** If identical twins dressed alike walked into our classroom, could we say that they vary? Why or why not?

Suggested answer: No because everything – from their looks to their clothes – is the same so they do not vary from each other.

Suggested Additional Vocabulary: violate, credit, rights, crimes, underage