

Transportation is how people travel. In Chicago, people travel to work in many ways. Some walk. Some drive cars. Many take a bus to work. And others take a train. The buses and trains are part of public transportation. They are part of a system. A system is how a lot of parts work together. The parts of public transportation in Chicago are all part of the Chicago Transit Authority, or CTA. Long ago, people walked to other places when they lived here. Or they rode on horses. Today, there are thousands of people who work in public transportation.

Public means everyone, and transportation means travel. Public transportation is a way everyone can travel in Chicago. If you look at the transportation map, you will see routes. Those are the ways the buses and trains go. The people who planned the routes looked at where people live and where they want to go. Many of the routes help workers get to their jobs every day.

Transportation means work, too. There are thousands of people who work to make the transportation system work. Some are bus drivers. Those drivers need more than a drivers' license. They complete special training to be drivers. That includes how to maneuver the big bus. Imagine turning a corner in a big bus. That is not easy. They need to learn how to communicate with the public, too. Many drivers face problems every day. For example, tourists from other countries may get on a bus and ask a question in a foreign language.

Trains have drivers, too. Those are called engineers. The train stays on a track, so they do not have to worry about turning corners. But they have to make sure the train moves at a safe speed. There are signals along the track that alert the driver when there is danger. The driver has to respond quickly.

There are many transportation workers you don't see but who are part of getting you places. They work in the offices where they oversee the trains and buses. They keep track of where all the trains and buses are. They watch the traffic. They watch it on computer monitors. They are not watching the cars they watch symbols on the computer screen that tell them how much traffic there is on different routes.

They plan changes in public transportation, too. The planners look at where people live. They look at the number of people who travel to work in different areas each day. They figure out if they should add more buses or trains. They figure out if they should change the route of a bus. They can't change the route of a train, but they can add more train lines. In fact, Chicago added a new line a few years ago. It is the Pink line.

Directions: Choose the best answer for each question

1. Which of these are part of public transportation?

- a. cars, buses, trains
- b. trains, buses, roads
- c. engineers, planners, cars
- d. engineers, passengers, tourists

2. Which of these is not part of traveling within a city?

- a. subway
- b. plane
- c. destination
- d. route

3. Which of these is a job that is part of public transportation?

- a. passenger
- b. tourist
- c. planner
- d. delivery

4. Which of these is a way public transportation has changed in Chicago?

- a. fewer horses
- b. fewer cars
- c. more people
- d. more streetcars

5. *Write your own answer to this question.*

What are some things that are part of the city that are public?

TEACHER NOTES: Develop Students' Skills: Exercise Thinking

These questions have not been validated, so decisions about student's achievement should not be made based on their responses. They are intended to exercise skills. Recommended activities include: students work in pairs to choose the best response; give students the questions without the responses so they generate their own answers; students make up additional questions; students make up questions like these for another passage.

Answers: *You can remove this answer key and then give it to students and ask them to figure out the basis for the correct response.*

Item	1	2	3	4
Answer	b	b	c	a

Question 5 is open-ended. Here is a suggested response.

5. Students may list public schools. They also may list public services such as police.

Every day before we go to school, our mother has to leave. She has to walk twelve blocks to get to the bus stop. Then she takes the bus to work. She is a commuter. But some days it is raining or snowing. We really think it's terrible that there isn't a bus that comes closer to our street.

At school, we learned about the city transit system. It includes buses, trains, and even trolleys. It is a public system. We have to pay for the rides, but the government pays a lot, too. The government gets its money from taxes. If you own your own car and drive to places, then you use private transportation.

I said to my mother, "We pay taxes. This is a public transportation system. It is our system. It should come closer to our home. I do not want you to have to walk so far to get to the bus."

She agreed that would be great. But she said it would take more than one family to get the bus line to change. I said I would ask my teacher about it. We could do a study and maybe get a petition.

Our teacher had told us about service learning. That is a way of learning when you study something, learn something, and help make your community better. I thought that having the bus be more available to us would be a great way to do service learning.

My teacher liked the idea. He talked with the principal. They said we could do the study. So our class surveyed all our parents. How many of them had to walk how many blocks to the bus stop, we asked. How many would use the bus more if it was easier to get to.

We collected our survey data. Then we made a table. We found that 90% of all the parents would use the bus more if it was easier to get to. We also found that only 20% of the parents could get to it easily, just by walking five blocks. For all the others, it took between six and 12 blocks. My mother was one of the people with the longest walk to the bus.

We made a map. We showed how the bus route could be changed to reach people better in our community. We showed where it could stop. We looked at corners to make sure the bus could turn on different blocks. Then my teacher called the Alderman. He asked the alderman if we could meet to talk about our study.

We met with the alderman. She was impressed. She said we had done a really good job of figuring out the problem and a solution. She promised she would talk with the head of the transportation system about it.

We thought that something would happen quickly, but it didn't. Just when we were giving up, our teacher got a call. It was from the transportation office. They said we were getting the change we asked for.

Now my mother only has to walk four blocks to get to the bus. So she can leave later. When she leaves in the morning, if it is raining or snowing, she always says, "I am so glad you got the bus route changed."

Directions: Choose the best answer for each question

6. What are some parts of planning a bus route?

- a. checking how long it is and how many people will use it
- b. figuring out the stops and turns
- c. making signs
- d. asking people to stop driving to work

7. What are tools the students used to make their plan?

- a. a map and a survey
- b. a map and a phone
- c. a meeting and a plan
- d. a service learning project

8. What is an important part of the alderman’s job?

- a. getting elected
- b. talking to students
- c. solving problems
- d. working with teachers

9. Which of these is a commuter you would see on a bus?

- a. a worker
- b. a bus driver
- c. a child going to school
- d. a family going on a trip

10. *Write your own answer to this question.*

What are two ways to classify kinds of transportation?

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Answers: *You can remove this answer key and then give it to students and ask them to figure out the basis for the correct response.*

Item	6	7	8	9
Answer	b	a	c	a

Question 10 is open-ended. Here is a suggested response.

10. Answers should be based on the article. They may be private and public.