Beneath the Headline

Connect a news story to earlier events and a lasting pattern

SS24.CWI.1c "Relate current news stories to past events and broader historical trends."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the recent news development, circle two earlier events that help explain it, and put a star beside the sentence that states the broader pattern connecting them.

Why Are Lead Pipes Still There?

1 In 2024, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) finalized a rule requiring most public water systems to replace lead service lines within ten years. These pipes connect water mains to buildings. Lead can enter drinking water when the metal corrodes, and exposure can harm children's brain development. A headline about the rule might sound like a sudden response to a new hazard. Yet many lead lines were installed decades ago, and replacing them involves digging, money, and coordination with property owners. Reading this story as part of a longer history helps explain why a known danger remains in the ground.

2 One earlier turning point came in 1986, when Congress amended the Safe Drinking Water Act to limit lead in newly installed plumbing. That change reduced future uses of lead but did not remove pipes already buried under streets and yards. Another turning point came in Flint, Michigan, in 2014. After the city switched its water source without proper corrosion control, lead from aging plumbing entered some residents' tap water. Flint drew national attention to the risks of old pipes and weak oversight. The 2024 rule addresses a problem that earlier restrictions could not erase and that Flint made difficult to ignore.

3 Together, these events show a broad pattern: public health rules can change quickly, but replacing old infrastructure often takes much longer. The connection does not mean the EPA rule was caused only by Flint. Concern about lead predates that crisis, and the 1986 law shows that lawmakers had acted earlier. Nor does every community face identical risks: the number of lead lines and the resources to replace them vary by place. When reading new reports about a town's pipe replacements, ask which past decisions left lines in place and whether the report explains who will pay to remove them.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why was the 2024 rule needed even though Congress limited lead in new plumbing in 1986?

2. How does the Flint crisis help explain the attention given to the 2024 rule?

3. Why would it be misleading to say that Flint alone caused the 2024 rule? Use an earlier event as evidence.

4. If a town reports that replacing its lead pipes will take years, how does that news fit the broader pattern in the passage?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine a news brief says a city is offering free lead-water tests in older apartment buildings while deciding which pipes to replace first. In 4 to 5 sentences, connect this news to one past event in the passage and the broader pattern, then ask one question that would help you avoid assuming the city's situation is exactly like the past event.

ANSWER KEY

Beneath the Headline

HIGH SCHOOL · SS24.CWI.1c

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the recent news development, circle two earlier events that help explain it, and put a star beside the sentence that states the broader pattern connecting them. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why was the 2024 rule needed even though Congress limited lead in new plumbing in 1986?	**The 1986 change limited lead in newly installed plumbing, but it did not remove lead pipes already in the ground.**
2	How does the Flint crisis help explain the attention given to the 2024 rule?	**Flint showed how lead from aging plumbing could enter tap water and drew national attention to old pipes and weak oversight.**
3	Why would it be misleading to say that Flint alone caused the 2024 rule? Use an earlier event as evidence.	**Concern about lead existed before Flint. Congress had already limited lead in new plumbing in 1986.**
4	If a town reports that replacing its lead pipes will take years, how does that news fit the broader pattern in the passage?	**It fits the pattern that public health rules can change faster than communities can replace old infrastructure.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

A city offering free lead-water tests is checking for a hazard that can remain in older plumbing. Flint's 2014 crisis shows why officials should check for lead and explain what they find. The broader pattern is that old infrastructure can outlast laws meant to prevent new lead plumbing. I would ask how many lead service lines the city has, because its situation may differ from Flint's.

Accept connections that accurately distinguish limits on new plumbing from the removal of existing pipes. For the open task, the student's question should identify information needed to judge whether the comparison fits.