Before the Vote

Examine how media claims shape a public debate.

11-12.CC.8 "Analyze the impact of the media on the public, including identifying and analyzing rhetorical and logical fallacies."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two media claims that could mislead the public, circle evidence that complicates those claims, and number two places where a media message changes what people say or do.

The Empty Bus Clip

1. In the fictional city of Bellport, officials tested a free evening bus for four weeks. A local video account posted a twelve-second clip of the bus crossing Cedar Bridge with no passengers visible. Its caption read, "Nobody uses this route. Stop wasting public money." By morning, the clip had been shared widely, and residents repeated the caption at a council meeting. The account did not say when the video was filmed or show any other trips. One viewer wrote that she now opposed the pilot, although she had never looked at the city's ridership reports.

2. A neighborhood newsletter offered a different frame. It quoted a restaurant worker who used the bus after her shift and reported that the city counted 420 rides during the pilot's final week, up from 260 in its first week. The newsletter also noted that a ride count does not reveal how many different people traveled. Meanwhile, a radio host argued, "Either end the free bus or take money from emergency services." He named no budget plan linking those choices. Callers soon debated which service mattered more, rather than asking whether another funding option existed.

3. Neither source settled whether the city should continue paying for the route. The weekly totals suggest growing use, but they do not show the cost per ride, whether riders had other ways home, or how the numbers compare with other routes. A council member requested those figures before the vote. At the next meeting, one resident cited the empty-bus clip as proof of failure; another cited the worker's experience as proof of success. Their arguments showed how a vivid moment or a personal story can shape public judgment before enough evidence is available.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What conclusion does the video caption draw from the clip, and why does the clip not support that conclusion?

2. How does the radio host narrow the public's view of the budget decision? Use a detail from the passage.

3. How does the newsletter's evidence challenge the video caption, and what can that evidence not establish?

4. Compare how the empty-bus clip and the worker's story influence residents at the next meeting. What do the residents overlook?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four- or five-sentence public comment recommending what the council should do next. Use one specific fact from the passage, explain how a media claim could mislead residents, and acknowledge a limit of the available evidence.

ANSWER KEY

Before the Vote

HIGH SCHOOL · 11-12.CC.8

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two media claims that could mislead the public, circle evidence that complicates those claims, and number two places where a media message changes what people say or do. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What conclusion does the video caption draw from the clip, and why does the clip not support that conclusion?	**The caption concludes that nobody uses the route. A twelve-second clip of one trip cannot establish ridership across the four-week pilot.**
2	How does the radio host narrow the public's view of the budget decision? Use a detail from the passage.	**The host presents ending the bus or taking money from emergency services as the only choices, despite naming no budget plan that links them. Callers then debate those two services instead of considering other funding options.**
3	How does the newsletter's evidence challenge the video caption, and what can that evidence not establish?	**The reported increase from 260 to 420 weekly rides challenges the claim that nobody uses the bus. Ride counts cannot show how many different people traveled or whether the route is worth its cost.**
4	Compare how the empty-bus clip and the worker's story influence residents at the next meeting. What do the residents overlook?	**One resident treats the clip as proof of failure, while another treats the worker's experience as proof of success. Both rely on a vivid example without enough evidence to judge the entire route.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The council should request cost and ridership details before deciding whether to continue the free evening bus. The city counted 420 rides in the final week, up from 260 in the first week, so the route appears to be gaining use. The empty-bus clip could mislead residents because one brief trip cannot show how many people rode during the pilot. Even the weekly counts do not tell us the cost per ride, which matters when deciding how to spend public money.

Accept different recommendations when students support them with a passage detail, explain a media claim's possible effect, and identify a genuine limit of the evidence. Do not treat the reported ride counts as a count of unique riders.