From Posts to Policy

Trace how coverage of a local issue can shape public opinion and decisions.

USG.3.14 "Describe the influence of the media and technology on public opinion and public policy."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two details showing how media shaped what residents thought or demanded, circle one detail showing how someone checked a claim, and number the public meeting and the board vote in the order they happened.

A Question About School Water

1. In the fictional city of Riverton, a school report found elevated lead in several drinking fountains. The report did not claim every tap was unsafe, but its numbers raised questions. A local newspaper interviewed a water expert, linked to the report, and explained which buildings had been tested. Its story helped residents understand the evidence and ask the school board about testing other fountains. A short television segment showed parents filling water bottles before school. That image made the issue feel urgent, even though it could not show how widespread the problem was.

2. On social media, students shared the newspaper link and posted requests for more tests. A video claiming that all city water was poisoned spread quickly, but the report only covered several school fountains. Some users checked the original report and corrected the claim. Others saw the video repeatedly because the platform recommended posts that drew strong reactions. Families without reliable internet heard less of the online discussion, while residents who followed local news saw different evidence. These differences in what people encountered shaped whether they demanded immediate closures, more testing, or no change at all.

3. At a public meeting, board members heard parents cite the newspaper's findings and the alarming video. Staff explained the report's limits and proposed testing every school fountain before deciding which ones needed replacement. After the meeting, the board voted to fund additional tests and post results on the district website and in paper notices sent home. The coverage did not force a particular vote, but it brought more people into the debate and put pressure on officials to respond. The new notices also gave families a way to judge the decision using evidence rather than a rumor.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the newspaper story and television segment affect residents in different ways?

2. How could the social media video change public opinion, and what in the passage shows that its claim needed checking?

3. Why might residents have formed different opinions about what the board should do?

4. How did media coverage contribute to the board's policy decision without determining the vote by itself?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Choose a different local policy issue. In four or five sentences, explain how two forms of media or technology could shape public opinion, how someone could check a claim, and how public reaction might affect a policy decision.

From Posts to Policy

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two details showing how media shaped what residents thought or demanded, circle one detail showing how someone checked a claim, and number the public meeting and the board vote in the order they happened. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the newspaper story and television segment affect residents in different ways?	**The newspaper explained the evidence and led residents to ask about more testing. The television images made the issue feel urgent but did not show how widespread it was.**
2	How could the social media video change public opinion, and what in the passage shows that its claim needed checking?	**The video could make people believe all city water was poisoned and demand immediate action. The report covered only several school fountains, and users checked it to correct the claim.**
3	Why might residents have formed different opinions about what the board should do?	**They encountered different information. Some repeatedly saw the alarming video, some followed local news, and families without reliable internet heard less of the online discussion.**
4	How did media coverage contribute to the board's policy decision without determining the vote by itself?	**Coverage brought more people into the debate and pressured officials to respond. After hearing from parents and staff, the board funded more tests and agreed to share the results.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Imagine our town is debating whether to add a weekend bus route. A local news story could interview riders about long trips, persuading residents that the route is needed. A viral post could falsely claim the route would cancel weekday service, leading others to oppose it, but residents could check the transit agency's proposal before sharing. If many people then speak at a council meeting, officials might fund a trial route and publish ridership results.

Accept other passage-supported explanations that connect media exposure to public opinion and the board's decision. For Part 3, look for two distinct media or technology influences, a way to check a claim, and a plausible link from public reaction to policy.