Choices Under Pressure

How circumstances shape public decisions

E.P.2.2.B "Analyze complex and interacting factors that influence multiple perspectives during different historical eras and contemporary events."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two factors in each era that could pull a decision in different directions. Circle the words that show whose perspective each factor reflects.

Public Health Decisions, Then and Now

1 In September 1918, Philadelphia prepared a huge parade to sell Liberty Loan bonds for the U.S. war effort. Influenza was already appearing among residents and sailors nearby. Some doctors urged city leaders to cancel the parade because crowds could spread infection. Other officials valued the bond drive: the government needed money for World War I, and a public parade could show support for soldiers. On September 28, the parade went ahead. Large crowds gathered, and the city soon faced a devastating rise in illness. The parade was one factor in the outbreak, not its only cause.

2 In 2020, many U.S. school districts faced a different public health decision: when and how to reopen classrooms during COVID-19. Some families and teachers feared that crowded rooms could expose students and staff to infection. Other families worried that remote classes would leave children without reliable internet, meals, or help from adults during the day. Some parents could not work from home and risked losing wages if children stayed home. District leaders weighed those concerns against changing case numbers and the limits of school buildings, such as poor ventilation. People could share a goal, keeping children safe, yet favor different plans.

3 These debates were not simply contests between people who cared about health and people who did not. In 1918, a parade supporter might see bond sales as an urgent wartime duty, while a doctor might expect a crowded event to overwhelm hospitals. In 2020, a teacher with a vulnerable family member might support remote learning, while a parent whose child depended on school meals might favor reopening. The choices also differed: schools could plan remote lessons, but a one-day parade could not move its crowd online in 1918. In both eras, available options shaped how people judged risk.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the war effort and concern about infection lead parade supporters and doctors toward different positions in 1918?

2. Why might a family favor reopening schools in 2020 even if it worried about infection? Connect two pressures described in the passage.

3. How might poor ventilation affect a teacher's view of reopening differently from the view of a parent whose child depended on school meals?

4. How did the options available in 1918 and 2020 shape the choices people could support?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine a 2020 district can reopen only a poorly ventilated school building, while a community center offers internet access to a limited number of students. In four to five sentences, compare how a teacher, a parent who cannot work from home, and a district leader might view reopening; explain how two factors interact, then propose a compromise and name one cost of it.

ANSWER KEY

Choices Under Pressure

HIGH SCHOOL · E.P.2.2.B

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two factors in each era that could pull a decision in different directions. Circle the words that show whose perspective each factor reflects. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the war effort and concern about infection lead parade supporters and doctors toward different positions in 1918?	**Supporters saw the parade as a way to sell bonds and show support for soldiers. Doctors urged cancellation because a crowd could spread influenza and overwhelm hospitals.**
2	Why might a family favor reopening schools in 2020 even if it worried about infection? Connect two pressures described in the passage.	**A family might worry about infection but lack reliable internet for remote classes. A parent who could not work from home might also lose wages while caring for a child.**
3	How might poor ventilation affect a teacher's view of reopening differently from the view of a parent whose child depended on school meals?	**Poor ventilation could increase the teacher's concern about bringing infection home to a vulnerable family member. The parent might still favor reopening because the child needed school meals.**
4	How did the options available in 1918 and 2020 shape the choices people could support?	**In 1918, people could support holding or canceling the parade, but they could not move its crowd online. In 2020, districts could offer remote lessons, though that option did not work equally well for every family.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

A teacher with a vulnerable family member might oppose reopening in a poorly ventilated building because infection could reach home. A parent who cannot work from home might support reopening so their child has supervision and the parent can keep earning wages. A district leader would have to consider both families' needs and the building's limits. Poor ventilation makes the parent's need for care harder to meet safely. The district could offer supervised study at the community center for a limited number of students, but its small capacity would leave some families without help.

Accept other passage-supported explanations that connect circumstances to differing perspectives. For Part 3, the proposed compromise must address at least one competing need and identify a plausible cost.