Beyond the Parade

Test claims against evidence and competing explanations

MWH.P.1.2.C "Reinforce critical thinking by evaluating and challenging ideas and assumptions, analyzing and explaining inconsistencies in reasoning."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each claim about the parade, circle evidence that supports or challenges it, and number places where a writer may have jumped to a conclusion.

A Parade During an Outbreak

1. On September 28, 1918, Philadelphia held a large Liberty Loan parade to raise money for the United States war effort. Influenza was spreading through the city, and some physicians warned that crowds could worsen the outbreak. City leaders allowed the parade to go ahead. Tens of thousands of people lined the route, standing close together to watch bands and marchers. Soon afterward, Philadelphia experienced a devastating wave of influenza. The parade is often cited as a dangerous decision. Yet the sequence alone cannot prove that every infection in the following weeks came from that single event.

2. Imagine two writers debating the decision. One argues that the parade raised money for the war, so holding it was safe. The other argues that illness rose afterward, so the parade caused the entire outbreak. The first writer points to a genuine benefit, while the second notices a troubling pattern. Neither writer reports how many parade spectators later became ill. Nor do they say how many cases began before the march. Both writers sound certain, although their claims depend on different kinds of evidence. The disagreement matters because leaders had to weigh public health against a wartime fundraising campaign.

3. Historical accounts show that influenza was present in Philadelphia before the parade. They also describe a sharp increase in cases afterward. Because infected people could spread flu without realizing it, close contact along a crowded route could have added to transmission. Yet schools, workplaces, and streetcars also brought people together. To investigate the parade's role, a historian could compare dates when spectators became sick with dates for people who did not attend. Even that comparison would have limits if attendees shared other crowded spaces. A careful conclusion would separate a plausible contribution from proof that one event explains every case.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What reasoning problem do the two writers share, despite their disagreement?

2. How would you challenge the first writer's claim that raising money made the parade safe?

3. Which passage details challenge the second writer's claim that the parade caused the entire outbreak?

4. A historian compares illness dates for spectators and people who did not attend. What possible inconsistency in that comparison would the historian need to investigate?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Invent a city official's claim about closing a public park during a heat wave. In four sentences, state the claim, identify an assumption behind it, describe an observation that would challenge it, and explain what else you would check before deciding.

ANSWER KEY

Beyond the Parade

HIGH SCHOOL · MWH.P.1.2.C

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline each claim about the parade, circle evidence that supports or challenges it, and number places where a writer may have jumped to a conclusion. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What reasoning problem do the two writers share, despite their disagreement?	**Both treat limited evidence as enough to support a certain, broad conclusion.**
2	How would you challenge the first writer's claim that raising money made the parade safe?	**Fundraising was a benefit, but it does not show that the crowded parade posed little risk of spreading influenza.**
3	Which passage details challenge the second writer's claim that the parade caused the entire outbreak?	**Influenza was present before the parade, and people also gathered in schools, workplaces, and streetcars. Cases rising afterward do not establish that the parade caused every case.**
4	A historian compares illness dates for spectators and people who did not attend. What possible inconsistency in that comparison would the historian need to investigate?	**People in both groups may have shared other crowded spaces, so an apparent difference might not be due only to parade attendance.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

A city official claims that closing the park during a heat wave will keep residents safe. This assumes people have cooler places to go. If heat-related emergency calls rose nearby after the closure, that observation would challenge the claim. Before deciding whether the closure caused the rise, I would check whether temperatures also increased.

Accept other passage-supported challenges that distinguish a benefit from evidence of safety or a sequence from proof of cause. For Your Turn, look for an original claim, a relevant assumption, a conflicting observation, and a check for another explanation.