When Water Changed

Build an inquiry from evidence about a public decision

MWH.P.1.2.D "Demonstrate understanding of content through the development of self-driven inquiries and the completion of multi-staged, authentic tasks and assessments."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline a detail that could spark your own question, circle two different kinds of evidence, and number two steps a council could take to check a claim.

Flint's Water Questions

1. In April 2014, Flint, Michigan, began using the Flint River as its drinking water source while a new pipeline was being built. The water was not treated with enough corrosion control to protect the city's aging pipes. As residents reported foul-smelling or discolored water, officials offered reassurances about its safety. These reports mattered, but a strange smell or color could not by itself show how much lead was in the water. Lead can enter drinking water when pipes and plumbing corrode, and exposure can harm children. For families deciding whether to use tap water, the difference between a reassurance and a test result was urgent.

2. Residents collected samples, and researchers at Virginia Tech tested water from Flint homes in 2015. Their results showed elevated lead in many samples, though a sample from one faucet could not describe every home. A separate study of children's blood tests found a higher share with elevated lead levels after the water switch, especially in neighborhoods with higher water lead levels. Blood tests revealed exposure, but they did not identify every source of lead for each child. Residents' accounts, water tests, and health records each answered a different part of the problem. Comparing them offered a stronger basis for decisions than treating any one source as the whole story.

3. Flint returned to its earlier water supplier in October 2015, but changing sources did not instantly repair pipes or restore public trust. Imagine a city council preparing a public report on how officials responded to residents' concerns. The council would need to compare dated notices with complaints and test results, check when each was recorded, and separate what the evidence shows from what remains uncertain. It could publish a short report explaining which warnings were heard, what decisions followed, and what further records are needed. Such a report would help residents judge a public decision, rather than simply memorize the date of a water switch.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Write a focused question a council could investigate about officials' response to residents. Which two kinds of records named in the passage would help answer it?

2. If a council wanted to check whether officials responded before or after evidence of lead became available, what should it do first and next?

3. How could water tests and children's blood tests strengthen an investigation together? Name one limit of either kind of evidence.

4. What could the council give residents at the end of its investigation, and what uncertainty should it make clear?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Your school is considering a new well for drinking water. In 90 to 110 words, write a plan for a school board briefing: pose your own focused question, describe three ordered steps using at least two kinds of evidence, state what you would deliver, and name one conclusion you cannot yet make.

ANSWER KEY

When Water Changed

HIGH SCHOOL · MWH.P.1.2.D

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline a detail that could spark your own question, circle two different kinds of evidence, and number two steps a council could take to check a claim. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Write a focused question a council could investigate about officials' response to residents. Which two kinds of records named in the passage would help answer it?	**For example: How soon after residents reported water problems did officials respond? Dated complaints and official notices would help establish the sequence.**
2	If a council wanted to check whether officials responded before or after evidence of lead became available, what should it do first and next?	**First, gather dated official notices, complaints, and test results. Next, compare when each was recorded to establish the sequence.**
3	How could water tests and children's blood tests strengthen an investigation together? Name one limit of either kind of evidence.	**Water tests show lead in sampled water, while blood tests show children's exposure. One faucet cannot represent every home, and a blood test cannot identify every source of lead.**
4	What could the council give residents at the end of its investigation, and what uncertainty should it make clear?	**It could publish a report on warnings, decisions, and remaining records to check. It should not claim that one faucet's result describes every home.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

My question is whether water from the proposed well would be safe for students throughout the school year. First, I would ask the facilities office for the well design and any groundwater tests near the site. Next, if the well is drilled, I would have a certified laboratory test water samples collected on different dates. Then I would compare the results with current drinking water standards and ask the health department about possible seasonal risks. I would give the school board a one-page briefing with the results, gaps, and recommended follow-up tests. I cannot claim the well is safe before the results arrive.

For the four passage-based questions, accept reasonable alternatives supported by the passage. For the transfer task, accept feasible plans for gathering future evidence; students should not invent test results or declare the proposed well safe.