Choices Under Pressure

Compare how competing needs shaped decisions in two public health crises.

MWH.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 pressures behind a decision in each era, circle the groups affected, and number two places where those pressures could lead groups to different views.

When Public Health Meets Daily Life

1. On September 28, 1918, Philadelphia held a parade to sell Liberty Bonds, which helped pay for the United States' war effort. Soldiers, bands, and thousands of spectators filled the streets as influenza was spreading. City leaders allowed the parade because raising money and showing support for troops seemed urgent. Some doctors warned that a large crowd could spread illness. Within days, infections surged and hospitals struggled to find beds. The parade did not create the virus, but it brought people close together at a dangerous moment. A decision praised by bond sellers could look reckless to hospital workers facing new patients.

2. By early October, Philadelphia closed schools and theaters and banned public gatherings. Officials hoped to slow infections, yet closures had different costs. A theater owner lost ticket sales, while a nurse might welcome fewer crowded places outside the hospital. Many families depended on wages from work that could not be done at home. Wartime production also mattered: factories making supplies for the military faced pressure to keep operating even when workers became ill. The same order could reduce contact in a theater while leaving factory workers exposed. Public health decisions were shaped not only by medical advice but also by income and wartime demands.

3. In 2020, COVID-19 forced many U.S. school districts to choose whether to hold classes in person or online. Health officials feared that crowded buildings could increase transmission, especially before vaccines were available. Teachers weighed their own health and students' need for face-to-face instruction. For some parents, remote classes also meant missing work to care for children. Others could work from home, but students without reliable internet faced obstacles their classmates did not. Unlike Philadelphia in 1918, districts could offer online lessons, yet that option did not erase unequal access. Both eras forced leaders to balance health risks against needs that fell unevenly across communities.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why might a bond seller and a hospital worker have judged the 1918 parade differently? Name a pressure on each.

2. How could Philadelphia's October closures benefit one group while harming another? Include a financial pressure.

3. How could health concerns and unequal internet access pull 2020 school decisions in different directions?

4. What health pressure appeared in both eras, and how did a condition in 2020 change people's options? Use one detail from each era.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine a U.S. city in 2020 deciding whether to reduce bus service during a COVID-19 outbreak. In one paragraph of 80 to 110 words, explain why a rider and a bus driver might disagree, connect two pressures from the passage, and add one plausible factor specific to buses.

ANSWER KEY

Choices Under Pressure

HIGH SCHOOL · MWH.P.2.2.B

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two pressures behind a decision in each era, circle the groups affected, and number two places where those pressures could lead groups to different views. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why might a bond seller and a hospital worker have judged the 1918 parade differently? Name a pressure on each.	**A bond seller might support the parade because Liberty Bonds funded the war. A hospital worker might oppose it because crowds could spread influenza and fill hospital beds.**
2	How could Philadelphia's October closures benefit one group while harming another? Include a financial pressure.	**A nurse might welcome fewer crowded places because they could slow infections. A theater owner lost ticket sales when theaters closed.**
3	How could health concerns and unequal internet access pull 2020 school decisions in different directions?	**Health officials feared transmission in crowded schools, so online classes offered a way to reduce contact. Students without reliable internet faced obstacles to learning online.**
4	What health pressure appeared in both eras, and how did a condition in 2020 change people's options? Use one detail from each era.	**Crowded places could spread illness in both eras. Philadelphia closed schools in 1918, while districts in 2020 could offer online lessons, though unreliable internet limited that option for some students.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

A rider who works in a hospital may oppose reducing bus service because missing a shift could mean lost wages and fewer people caring for patients. A driver may favor fewer trips because each crowded ride raises the chance of infection, a concern health officials also faced when considering schools in 2020. Yet fewer buses could pack remaining vehicles, making the driver's risk worse. The city could instead keep frequent buses but spend money on extra cleaning and protective supplies. That cost might strain its transit budget, so neither person's preferred solution is simple.

Accept other supported perspectives that explain how health, income, wartime demands, or unequal access interact. For Part 3, the bus-specific factor may be any plausible condition, such as crowding, cleaning costs, or service frequency.