Two Cities, One Crisis

Compare how timing and local conditions shaped responses to influenza.

OKH.P.2.2.C "Evaluate how multiple, complex events are shaped by unique circumstances of time and place; construct and interpret parallel timelines."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each dated Philadelphia event once and each dated St. Louis event twice. Circle local conditions that help explain when each city acted.

Influenza in Philadelphia and St. Louis

1. In 1918, influenza swept through U.S. cities while the country fought World War I. Philadelphia had a busy naval yard where sailors became ill in September. On September 28, the city held a huge parade to raise money for the war. Crowds packed the streets as soldiers, bands, and floats passed. City leaders had heard warnings about influenza, but the parade went forward. On October 3, officials closed schools and theaters and banned public gatherings. By then, infections were spreading rapidly. The order came after a large crowd had already gathered in the city.

2. St. Louis faced the same national emergency but had a different local sequence. Influenza cases appeared there in early October. On October 7, city officials closed schools, theaters, and churches and restricted public gatherings. The city's health commissioner, Max C. Starkloff, supported these limits as cases began to rise. Students stayed out of classrooms, audiences left theaters empty, and congregations could not meet as usual. The measures aimed to slow the virus by reducing close contact, not to cure those who were already ill. St. Louis still suffered illness and death despite its early response.

3. In both cities, the illness moved through crowded places, but officials did not act at the same point in their outbreaks. Philadelphia's parade happened while sailors at its naval yard were already sick; its closure order followed several days later. St. Louis restricted gatherings close to the start of its local outbreak. Researchers have found that St. Louis recorded a lower influenza death rate than Philadelphia. The contrast suggests timing mattered, but it does not prove any single policy caused the entire difference. Local crowding, the number of people already infected, and public cooperation could also affect the outcome.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Which city restricted gatherings closer to the start of its outbreak? What detail in the passage supports your answer?

2. How did Philadelphia's wartime setting help shape its September 28 event?

3. How many days passed between Philadelphia's parade and its closure order? Why does that order of events matter?

4. Why does St. Louis's lower death rate not prove that its restrictions alone caused the difference between the cities?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Build parallel timelines for the two cities using the three dates in the passage. Write “not stated” where the passage gives no event for a city on that date, then add one sentence explaining why “not stated” does not mean nothing happened.

DATE	PHILADELPHIA	ST. LOUIS

ANSWER KEY

Two Cities, One Crisis

HIGH SCHOOL · OKH.P.2.2.C

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline each dated Philadelphia event once and each dated St. Louis event twice. Circle local conditions that help explain when each city acted. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Which city restricted gatherings closer to the start of its outbreak? What detail in the passage supports your answer?	**St. Louis. It restricted gatherings on October 7 as cases began to rise, close to the start of its local outbreak.**
2	How did Philadelphia's wartime setting help shape its September 28 event?	**The city held a large parade to raise money for World War I, bringing crowds together despite warnings about influenza.**
3	How many days passed between Philadelphia's parade and its closure order? Why does that order of events matter?	**Five days passed. A large crowd gathered before officials closed schools and theaters and banned public gatherings, giving the virus an opportunity to spread.**
4	Why does St. Louis's lower death rate not prove that its restrictions alone caused the difference between the cities?	**Other conditions could have affected the outcome, including local crowding, how many people were already infected, and public cooperation.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

September 28 | Large war fundraising parade | Not stated
October 3 | Schools and theaters closed; public gatherings banned | Not stated
October 7 | Not stated | Schools, theaters, and churches closed; public gatherings restricted
"Not stated" means the passage gives no event for that city on that date, not that the city had no events.

Accept equivalent descriptions of the dated events. For the timeline, do not treat "not stated" as evidence that no action or event occurred.